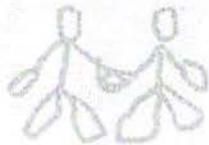


# Beautiful Junk



PROJECT HEAD START  
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



# WRITTEN

by Dianne Warner and Jeanne Quill

## **"BEAUTIFUL JUNK"**

Educators are often unprepared for the extensive list of equipment and supplies considered necessary for a preschool program. What they are often not aware of is the equally long list of program aids that can be added, with relatively low costs, to supplement purchased equipment. This list constitutes what we in the profession call "beautiful junk" or found materials.

Not only is this equipment a help to any school budget, it stimulates creativity in the first school experiences. It grants children an opportunity to work out and solve for themselves their own play needs. The creative teacher, standing ready to aid and abet, awaits these "sparks" from the children with materials.

Called for then, is leg work, head work and hand work. Most of these materials are available for the asking. Some are sold for minimal charge. Contrary to some beliefs, it is not begging in the usual sense. Most merchants are quite amused to hear what you intend to do with their waste materials. This same leg work is beneficial in interpreting good preschool program to the larger community. Through us they learn how important we regard these early years, why we go to such lengths to be ready.

Attached is a list of possible sources and ideas. Somebody once said, "Necessity is the mother of invention". Use necessity as your guide and keep your eyes and ears open to the endless list of "beautiful junk".

Dianne Warner

# SOURCES

## **MILLWORK OR LUMBER COMPANY**

Wood "scraps" suitable for the carpentry table or art cabinet are given away by the box load. Sawdust is available as well as fascinating curls of wood created by planing. Leave a marked box and come back for it. Lathed scraps are available for purchase in some places and add special pieces for young builders. Button molds (used as wheels in the display) are available for purchase in 1", 1½", and 2" sizes.

## **GROCERY STORE**

Boxes, boxes, boxes and a purpose for every size. Try a box corner for a table easel, a larger size for a puppet theater, a post office, or store, and of course, several for dramatic play of any sort desired by the children. Many cardboard displays disposed of by stores are suitable for various purposes in the classroom. Cardboard soft drink cartons are excellent for holding paint containers (prevent spilling at the table), and one painted white will be welcomed by your school "milkman".

## **TELEPHONE COMPANY**

Empty telephone cable spools are wonderful additions to the outside play area. Small (3 ft. in diameter) ones make lovely doll corner tables. Stop a telephone man and put your name on the waiting list. On occasion, they may part with old instruments, but scrap colorful telephone wire is always available.

## **SOFT-DRINK COMPANIES**

Wooden soft-drink crates are available at a minimal charge. Painted bright colors (children may do this in small numbers using left-over latex paint) they serve as excellent substitutes for the commercial hollow blocks. A set of casters on one will create a durable wagon for hauling blocks or friends. Set the casters in far enough to allow stacking. Wet strength fiberboard beer cases are excellent storage units. The children can easily handle them.

## **ICE CREAM STORES**

Ask at your favorite restaurant for their empty 3 gallon cardboard ice cream containers. Uses range from space helmets through spatter paint screen forms.

## **GAS STATIONS AND GARAGES**

Here you may obtain tires for playground swings, inner tubes to supplement materials at the carpentry table, and bottle caps from the drink machines. You may find a garage willing to cut the steering wheel from a wrecked automobile for the children to use in their play. Old tractor tires make fabulous bouncy sandboxes.

## **WALLPAPER STORES**

Wallpaper books of discontinued patterns are usually available on the first come, first served basis. Use textured sheets for easel painting. Those with fabric samples are especially nice. Precut samples make excellent puppet skirts.

## **CARPET SHOPS**

Many carpet shops have samples of discontinued rug patterns available for

10¢ a piece. Larger samples cost more but can be used as rest mats. Here, too, you will find the soft foam underpadding pieces.

### **TILE STORES**

Tile stores frequently have broken patterns of mosaic tile available for a minimal charge. Children enjoy matching, counting, and creating with these colorful squares. You can supplement by making parquetry boards on cardboard.

### **BOAT RENTALS AND MARINAS**

At the beginning or end of the season, many rowboats or sailboats no longer "seaworthy" are destroyed. If you can find a truck and some help, they are yours.

### **MOVING COMPANIES**

Overseas moving companies may occasionally part with a large, amazingly well-built packing crate for the cost of transportation. They make excellent play houses. It's worth a try. The space ship on page 6 is made from a fiberboard drum also used by packing companies.

### **PRINT SHOPS**

Print shops have assorted sizes of "scrap" paper. I leave a box under the counter of my favorite print shop, and go to empty it every 2 weeks or so. Colored cardboard tickets, letter sheets and all sorts of paper for collage.

### **BUILDERS AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION**

New Construction offers at least the possibility of obtaining an unused sewer pipe for the playground.

### **PAINT SHOPS**

Paint color cards are fun color experiences and excellent collage. Old paint brushes are great for painting buildings with water. Cardboard paint buckets made the ball and bean bag game on page 5.

### **FABRIC SHOPS OR DEPARTMENTS**

Stores that carry material dispose of the inner cardboard form which makes an excellent plaque for children's art work. You may also find ribbon scraps to add to your art materials and fabric remnants if you don't get enough from sewing mothers.

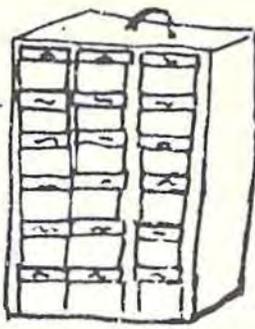
### **HOME**

Dress-up clothes (maternity tops are ideal, need no hemming), ties, shoes (men's and women's), hats, costume jewelry. Old petticoats make lovely skirts, frilly nylon blouses, a bridal veil can be made by attaching old curtains to a clip hat. (I supplement by thrift shop sales.)

Empty food containers for store or building, paper towel rolls, empty detergent bottles, bleach bottles, cookie sheets for easy to clean finger painting, buttons, spools for bubble blowing, flashlight, yarn, scraps of material, empty egg cartons, aluminum pie plates, small juice cans and baby food jars for easel, newspapers for papier mache, magazines for cutting and pasting, scarves for dancing (dyed cheesecloth will work equally well) as butterflies, wind, kites; empty shoe polish bottles to refill with paint, cracker crumb container for sprinkling sand over glue patterns.

Jeanne Quill

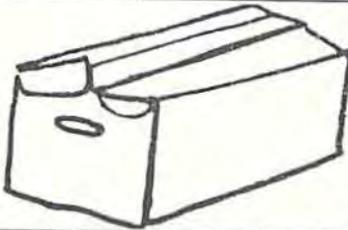
Try these.



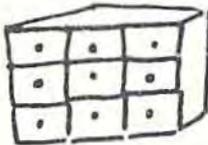
1  
**Portable art file.** Load up picture rolls in art corner and carry to near the door for departure time. Ask at Shoe Store for large box and shoe boxes to fill it. Cut off end of shoe boxes but not the lid.



2  
**Stacked Pear or Peach Crates.** Nail or screw together and paint for shelves.



3  
**Painted Beer Cases.** Great for storage—light enough for children to tote.



4  
**Teacher file for little things.** Stacked match boxes.



5  
**Painted Coke six packs** loaded with paint jars, 2 oz. coffee jars or jr. baby food jars. Do one in white for the School Milkman. Load with cylinder blocks.



6  
**Carpet scraps and samples**



7  
**Puppet Rack.** Small detergent bottles bolted to scrap lumber.

8



**Flannel Board.** Stretch felt over any board. I used canvas board.  
For story figures cut up 25¢ story books (use 2 if you need pictures on both sides of page). Any paper will adhere briefly if rubbed on wrong side with sand paper. Cut felt shapes, colors, etc., etc.

9



**Hollow Blocks** Painted soft drink cases.  
Cost: 25¢ each and paint.

10



**Rainy Day Fun**  
**Cardboard paint buckets** fastened to a board.  
Toss bean bag or small ball.

11



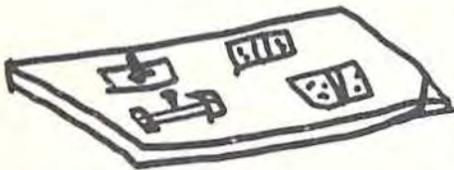
**Doll Wagon or Block Storage.** Painted peach crate plus casters.

12



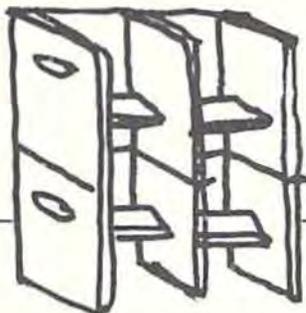
**Wheel Toys.** Scrap lumber boards plus a cocoa can, bread crumb shaker, spool, bead, button mold wheels—one shiny engine. Coal car is bread tin. Fasten with screen door hardware.

13



**Busy Board**  
Assemble hardware fixtures on gaily painted board.

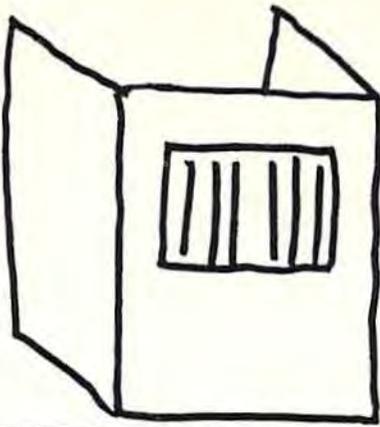
14



**Doll House**  
Stack chair blocks, add roof boards and doll house furniture.

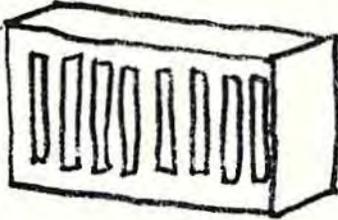
**Boxes—Ah Boxes**  
This is only a starter list!

15



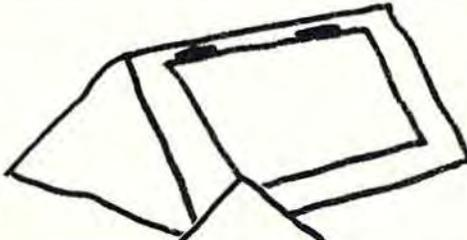
**Puppet stage**  
A washer box.

16



**Cage**  
Stereo box.

17



**Table Easel**  
Cut box diagonally in half and paint.

18



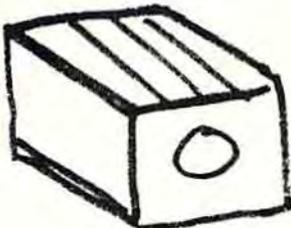
**Space Ship**  
A tall fiberboard drum.  
Cut door and windows.  
Cone is cut poster board.

19



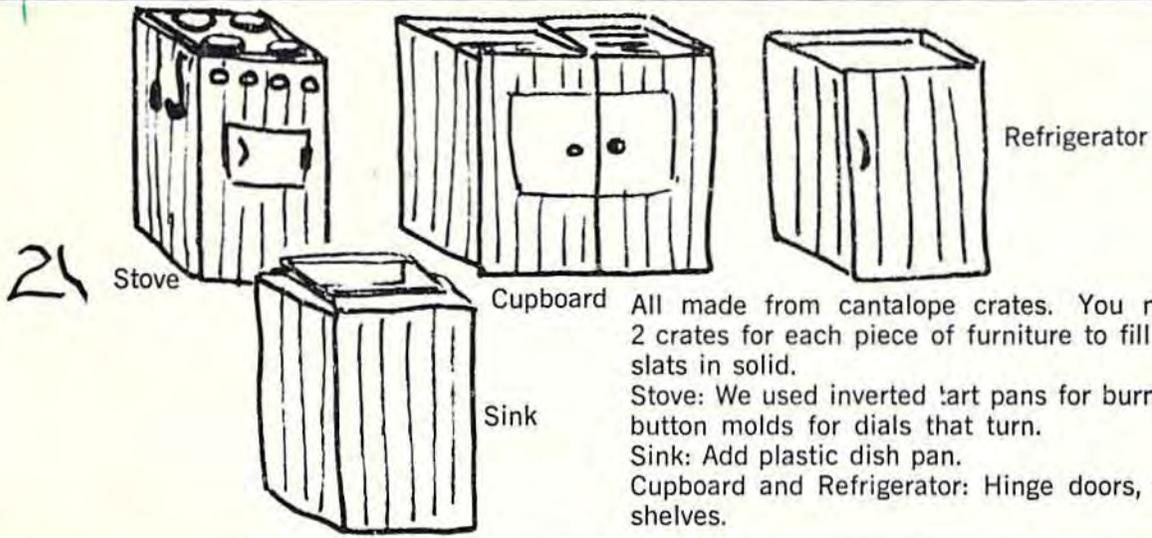
**Space Helmet.** 3 gallon ice cream container  
painted silver.

20



**Feel Box**  
Fill with fabrics and textured goodies. Cut  
hole big enough for hand only.

## Doll Corner Furniture



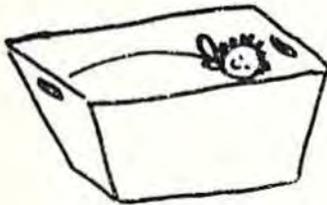
All made from cantalope crates. You need 2 crates for each piece of furniture to fill the slats in solid.

Stove: We used inverted tart pans for burners, button molds for dials that turn.

Sink: Add plastic dish pan.

Cupboard and Refrigerator: Hinge doors, add shelves.

22



### Doll Bed

Add pillow, receiving blanket to fiberboard bin.

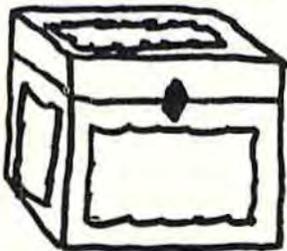
23



### Ferrotypograph Mirror

Won't break but mount so sharp edges aren't exposed.

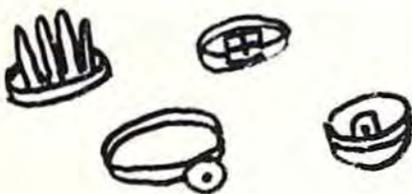
24



### Small Trunk

Hides dress up clothes. Paint it pretty colors.

25



### All sorts of hats—

Keep 1" strips of railroad board on hand. Add badges, feathers, etc. to supplement the play of the moment.

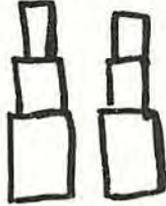
## Table Toys

25



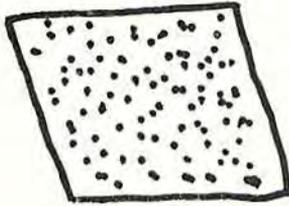
**Beads**—Paint spools (I bought 144 for 50¢ empty) String on boot laces.

27



**Stacked Cans**—Easy to do. Use assorted sizes and colors.

28



**Peg Boards**—We cut commercial peg board in 12" squares and glued 2 squares together to make deeper. The acoustical tiles that used to be available are now very hard to get. We had to cut off golf tees so they would stand straight.

29



**Color Lotto**—Squares of construction paper mounted on cardboard and covered with clear contact. Children match the colored squares.

30



**Parquetry**—Floor covering samples used as tiles on home-made designs. Small squares can also be sorted and counted. Tiles are available in several sizes.

31



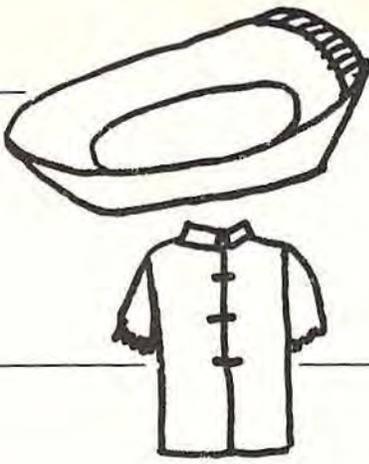
**Sound Shakers**—Small wooden pill boxes filled with various materials—rice beans, tooth picks, screws. Which is loud, which is soft? Seal the lids! They are placed in a lip stick holder.

### Water Play

Use an old baby bath plus spray hose, corks, funnels, measuring cups, spoons, egg beaters, straws (large plastic ones are great), sponges, pill bottles, plastic lemons, spray cans, detergent bottles.

Save outgrown slickers for water play. Buckle up the back and the kids are protected. (Cut the sleeves shorter)

32



### Art Room Ideas

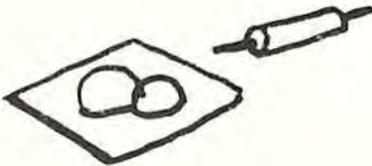
**Finger paint** on old cookie trays. Stack 'em up by sink for cleaning later. I used liquid blue starch and powder paint.

33



**Floor tiles** make great clay boards—Pretty too!

34



**Spatter Painting: 2 Ideas**—Use top of 3 gallon ice cream container. Set piece of screen in with masking tape. Use old toothbrushes.

35

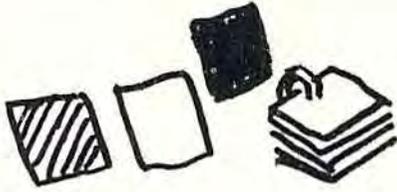


**Stainless steel aquarium or cage lid** set on blocks gives wide spatter area.

36



37



**Paint Color Cards**

Mix and match colors, paste, use as parquetry.

38



**Scissor Rack**

Inverted egg carton sprayed with paint.

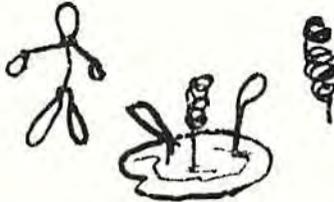
39



**Crayon cans**

Orange juice cans painted.

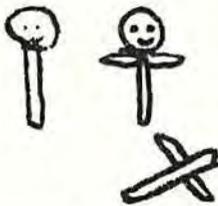
40



**Telephone Wire**

Use like pipe cleaners, or with clay.

41



**Tongue Blades**

Puppets  
Airplanes

42



**Paint Dishes**

TV Dinner pans  
Small tin pans  
Inverted egg cartons lined with aluminum foil  
(add starch or powdered soap to paint)

**Fun Materials to Save**  
(A partial list)

Aluminum foil	Glass	Rope
Ball bearings	Gourds	Rubber bands
Barrel hoops	Hat boxes	Rubberized cloth
Beads	Hooks	Rug yarn
Belts	Innertubes	Safety pins
Blankets	Isenglass	Sand
Bottles	Jars	Sandpaper
Boxes	Jugs	Sea shells
Bracelets	Lacing	Sealing wax
Braiding	Lamp shades	Seeds
Brads	Leather remnants	Sheepskin
Brass	Linoleum	Shoelaces
Brooches	Marbles	Shoe polish
Buckles	Masonite	Snaps
Buckram	Metal foil	Soap
Burlap	Mirrors	Sponges
Buttons	Muslin	Spools
Candles	Nails	Steel wool
Cartons	Necklaces	Stockings
Canvas	Neckties	Sweaters
Celluloid	Oilcloth	Tacks
Cellophane	Orange sticks	Tape
Celotex	Ornaments	Thread
Chains	Pans	Tiles
Chalk	Paper bags	Tin cans
Chamois	Paper boxes	Tin foil
Clay	Paper cardboard	Tongue depressors
Clock spring	Paper corrugated	Towels
Cloth	Paper dishes	Tubes
Colored pictures	Paper doilies	Twine
Confetti	Paper napkins	Wall board
Containers	Paper newspapers	Wax
Copper foil	Paper tissue	Window blinds
Cord	Paper towels	Wire
Corn husks	Paper tracing	Wire eyelets
Corn stalks	Paper tubes	Wire hairpins
Costume jewelry	Paper wallpaper	Wire hooks
Crayon pieces	Paper wrapping	Wire mesh
Crystals	Phonograph records	Wire paperclips
Emory cloth	Photographs	Wire screen
Excelsior	Picture frames	Wire staples
Eyelets	Pine cones	Wooden beads
Fabrics	Pins	Wooden blocks
Felt	Pipe cleaners	Wooden boards
Felt hats	Plastic bags	Wooden clothespins
Fibre	Plastic board	Wooden dowels
Flannel	Plastic paint	Wooden sticks
Flit gun	Pocketbooks	Wool
Floor covering	Reeds	Yarn
Gimp	Ribbon	Zippers
Gimp nails	Rings	

Taken from: The Elementary Course of Study, Interim Report—Bulletin 233B.1949 Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction