



Be transported to an imaginary fairytale world. The Fairy Tales Scenery Stones are a tactile and open-ended addition to small world and loose parts play. Their shapes and patterns promote creativity, language and pattern making.

Loose parts

Offer the Scenery Stones alongside other fairytale-themed loose parts, to boost children's critical thinking and creativity. Using loose parts to create patterns and stacks, investigate different textures and invent stories builds on several areas of learning, including maths, literacy, understanding of the world and fine motor skills.

A fairy tale loose parts collection is ideal for outdoors. You might like to use the sand tray or just a grassy area. As well as the Scenery Stones, your loose parts could include:

- Twigs, larger branches, leaves, moss, tree bark, pine cones and stones
- Colourful pieces of floaty fabric, felt shapes, pompoms, feathers, raffia or pieces of pipe cleaners
- Glass beads, gemstones, buttons or beads
- Flowers (real or artificial) and wooden resources, such as log slices, blocks or trays

Fairy tale creativity

The stones also offer simple and open-ended ways to get creative and develop fine motor skills:

- Use the stones and natural materials to create fairytale pictures or patterns – indoors or outside.
- Press the stones into dough to leave an imprint. What does the imprint feel like? You could also make patterns with imprints.
- Use wax crayons and paper to make rubbings of the stones. Learning how much pressure to apply is great for fine motor skills.

Small fairytale world

The Scenery Stones are an open-ended way to enhance small world play, inspiring children's imagination and promoting language development. Use these ideas to create a fairytale world inside or outdoors:

Fairyland floor

A fairyland floor made with sensory materials will make small world play even more inviting.

- Natural materials are often sensory and suitable as a base for small world play – try using pebbles, leaves, sand or a combination.
- Other sensory bases could include artificial grass, dry lentils, colourful play dough, biodegradable sensory goo or cloud dough. (To make cloud dough, you need one part sensitive lotion or conditioner to two parts cornflour, plus any food dye you wish to add.)
- Alternatively, you might choose to use a printed picture of a fairytale landscape as the base to prompt story telling – maybe with features such as streams, fields, woods, cottages, castles and paths.



Fairytale furnishings

- For natural features, you could add trees, small log slices for tree stumps, leaves, pine cones, flowers, plants or pieces of foliage (real or artificial). Small sticks are useful for adding stumps to the toadstool stones.
- Position the star and rainbow stones standing upright to create hiding places for magical characters.
- You could create a waterfall for fairies to play behind using blue fabric, or a magical pool using a mirror.
- Other fairytale elements could include Yellow Door's small/large tree stump or hollow log, Little Lands Enchanted World, a log house or a castle.



Colourful characters

- Add fairytale people or animals, such as Little Lands: Fantasy Figures. You might like to focus on fairies, royal characters, animals or a specific traditional tale – for example using wooden characters from Jack and the Beanstalk or Little Red Riding Hood.
- You might like to cut out transparent fairy wings (from thick tissue paper or thin fabric) and provide them alongside glue dots for children to attach wings to any character they choose.
- Add characters from a book with a fairytale theme for small world bookish play. These could be wooden characters or printed out illustrations. Leave the book alongside for children to interact with too.



Books about fairy tales

Ladybird Tales: Classic Stories to Share

There is No Big Bad Wolf in this Story by Lou Carter

Mixed Up Fairy Tales by Hilary Robinson

Spinderella by Julia Donaldson

More to explore

The stones provide opportunities for developing mathematical thinking, such as counting and spatial reasoning:

- Talk about the different shapes and sizes of the Scenery Stones. Children might enjoy laying them out and counting them, or sorting them into the three sets of six.



- Make imprints in play dough using the different stones. Stamp the stones in different orientations using both the smooth and patterned sides. Then ask the children to match the stones to the imprints. They will develop important spatial reasoning skills as they learn to turn and flip the stones to make them match the imprints.
- Use the stones to create repeating patterns – either flat on a surface, or in a stack. Talk about the pattern the child makes – is it star, rainbow, toadstool, star, rainbow, toadstool (ABC pattern) or something else?
- Create patterns with reflectional and rotational symmetry. Children might also create patterns that radiate out from the centre.
- Encourage positional language – maybe the toadstool stone is *between* two stars, or perhaps the fairy is *behind* a rainbow.

Get talking – useful words

Fairy, dwarf, troll, ogre, giant, dragon, unicorn, wolf, princess, prince, king, queen, knight, castle, cottage, forest, woods, mountain, toadstool, rainbow, star, wand, enchanted, magical.