This booklet presents several ideas for using old tires as equipment in both indoor and outdoor learning settings for young children. (JMB)
TIRES ARE TOOLS FOR LEARNING

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION ON CHILDREN UNDER SIX

EU160181-PS010041
THE TIRE WEB

Fasten tires together with rope or chains to make a triangle. Put knots underneath. Attach to securely mounted utility poles, sturdy posts— even trees. The highest point should be at least four feet from the ground.
Tires Are Tools For Learning

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Social Services Division
Austin, Texas 78701

Published by
Southern Association On Children Under Six
Tires Are...

- Available in many sizes
- Inexpensive, sometimes free
- Safe for children
- Very durable, require minimum care
- Easy to use
- Attractive when painted lightly
- Convenient to store
- Suitable for aircraft and more
Use Loose Tires To ...

Set on, relax in,

Stack and pile in, jump from,

Play spin, rest, be a jack-in-a-box.

Arrange on the ground or an elevated surface and

Play rocket, train, bus or boat.

Or roll 'em!

Even three-year-olds are sufficiently well-coordinated to roll something like a tiny trailer tire.
Fill Tires

With Dirt

Place the tire on a base, such as an old cookie sheet or a squashed garbage can lid, and plan a "hardpan" that can be moved around easily.

For vegetable gardens, special flowers,
seed beds and grass beds

Protect young shrubs and trees in traffic areas.
Fill Very Large Tires
For Digging Boxes

Arrange several together to fit a corner or circle a tree.
Fill with sand or dirt.
Place in a shady spot.

Fill and cover large tires with dirt to make interesting sounds.
Cut very large tires in half horizontally and fill with water.

FOR WADING  POURING  SPOUTING
FLOATING  TOY FLOATING

What fun!
PERMANENT PLACES TO SIT
Stack two tires together for this if you wish.
A PLAYGROUND DIVIDER

DIRECTIONS
Materials needed
Tire casing  Water
Ready-mix cement  Container for mixing

1. Place tire on a piece of heavy cardboard.
2. Fill tire with prepared cement.
3. Level and smooth cement.
4. Remove cardboard when the cement is dry.
Put An Upright In Cement

To Make A...

FLAG POLE
WAX FUSE
WEATHER VANE

PUNCHING BAG
With a cord attach a perforated plastic bag filled with shredded plastic, or a balloon or a ball.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHT
Tie one RED and one GREEN plastic bottle to a nine-foot length of rope. Children can raise and lower the bottles to play changing traffic lights.

TENT
Just put an old bedspread or other large piece of fabric over the upright. Use smaller tires to hold down the corners.
Build Two Standards To

Support an infant swing.

Connect with a net for school-age children to play games using balls.

Join with a cord. From this hang a piece of cardboard for a bean bag pitching target.

Place parallel to fence. Stretch rope from fence to standards and back to fence.

Cover for temporary shade or a playhouse.

Materials needed

- Tire casing
- Prepared ready-mix cement
- Upright, approximately 5 ft. long (4 ft. for tent)

(For pipe or 2" x 1" plank or smooth post.)

- Eye or hook to attach things at top.

1. Place tire on heavy cardboard
2. Stand upright in center.
3. Fill tire with prepared cement and smooth.
4. Hold uprights in place with boards placed across tire until cement is dry.
Tie Tires With A Rope
Or A Chain For A...

Children can sit best on small trailer tires. With a rope attached, they are easy for another child to pull.

Fasten tandem swings between:
- Old utility poles
- Sturdy posts
- Between trees
- Or hang them on an extra swing stand.
Punch holes in both sides of casings of larger tires and thread a rope through to make a more stable ladder.

Ladders

Tie or chain smaller tires through the center to form a simple ladder.

Pull Toys

Attach a rope or chain to a small tire to make a pull toy, trailer for a tricycle, or an anchor for a boat. (See page 15 for directions.)
Use Tires & Boards

To Make...

SEE SAWS

BALANCING BOARDS

BOUNCING BOARDS

ROLLING GAMES
STAGE & SEATING FOR STORY TIME
CHILDREN'S PRETEND SHOWS

LOW TABLES FOR OUTDOOR SNACKS
ART  BLOWING BUBBLES

ROLL-A-POLE
Make an unusual rolling device by placing small trailer tires on each end of a short piece of discarded utility pole.

Storage

Children can stack tires neatly to low heights.

Where space is limited, arrange tall stacks over one of the standards.

If tires are to be stored outside, punch holes in each tire to provide water drainage.
Anchor In Cement
For Permanent Outdoor Equipment

BOUNCING HORSES

DIRECTIONS
Materials needed:
Tire casings
Prepared ready-mix cement

1. Dig a trench in the ground 8 to 12 inches deep.
2. Prop each tire in the desired position.
3. Fill the trench with cement.
Level the top of the cement 1 or 2 inches below ground level. (Later smooth the playground soil over the dry cement.)
Tips for the Teacher

Try these approaches in challenging situations:

In the grumpy child, who is making everyone including himself unhappy, say, "I know how to make a boat just for you. Let's find the big yellow tire...Would you like to rest in it here by me? I will tell the others you want to be alone for awhile."

Your children aren't as independent as they are capable of being. So when they ask you to lift them to the high swing or up a tree, say, "Let's find a way for you to climb yourself. Do you have any ideas? (Pause) I do. Why don't we stack one red tire on top of another red tire? I think you can reach the swing then."

All of your three-year-olds want to use two wagons. Quietly but with enthusiasm to the ones left out you say, "Who wants to ride the bus (assuming they are acquainted with buses)? If we place all the blue tires in a row we can make a bus." Help them find and arrange the tires.

For the poorly coordinated children, you can make all sorts of arrangements with your tires and boards. If your structure itself isn't interesting enough or if a child is afraid, then say, "Here's a bridge for Mary." Or sing slow as you lightly hold Juan's hand while he walks on the board, "This is the way Juan walks across, walks across, etc."

You'll find many ways tires can broaden your children's learning experiences. For instance, children cannot really learn about plant growth unless they participate in the whole process. Your children can grow lots of lettuce and other vegetables in the tire gardens.
Tips for the Equipment Planner

Although you probably have a plan for your playground, how about adding some tires to your permanent equipment? They will last for a long, long time.

PAINTING
To make your grounds as appealing as possible to the staff, the children and the public, you may add some color with a light coat of paint to the tires. They hold paint well; there is no need to paint between the treads.

CLEANING
If you use old tires, you probably won't have to worry about the black rubbing off. Of course you can always scrub them with soap and water or hose them down occasionally when you clean other equipment.

DRAINING
You'll want to punch holes in tires left outside so that water will drain out quickly. This is a must to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in them.

STORING
If possible store loose tires and accessories inside. They are good for active and imaginative rainy day play. (And uninvited visitors won't be tempted to carry them away either.)
Selecting and Using Accessories

Boards
A good rule of thumb is at least eight boards per playyard:
Four, 2" x 4" x 10' for balancing
Four, 1" x 10" x 8' or 10' for other purposes
Any other length you choose

Chains, Ropes and Attachments
See your local hardware salesman for information about the weight different size chains support. For the cautious, #8-0 is an excellent size for swings.

Loose chains or ropes may be dangerous but chains and ropes attached to tires are not. Fasten them permanently to the tires with repair links, size 1/4 inch (see figure 1). Three or four-foot lengths work well for such items as sleds.

Since self-help is so important, attach snap hooks to the end of all ropes and chains (see figure 2). Children learn to manipulate these quickly and can fasten their tires together, to tricycles, to the jungle gym, etc.

Fig. 1
Fig. 2

EDITOR'S NOTE: I hope you will enjoy using tires as tools for learning as much as I have. Perhaps the parents will implement some of your ideas at home when they hear about and see what the children and you are doing. When you discover additional ideas for using tires, won't you tell us about them?