

Spiritual Flourishing & Loose Parts

Deb Schein, workshop leader

Time: May 31, 2024 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89564636446>

Meeting ID: 895 6463 6446

### **Abstract**

In Minnesota (USA), a group of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) have opened up a Loose Parts Laboratory. The term Loose Parts (LP) is used today to describe the use of recycled or natural materials for educational purposes. As one of the founders of this site, I have been collecting data on how loose parts can nurture children's spiritual flourishing. It is clear that when children play with loose parts, they also appear to strengthen their own identity, build relationships, and experience wonder and awe, which lead to new questions. Loose parts are often associated with STEM and STEAM. In viewing loose parts as tools for nurturing spiritual flourishing, they also become tools for STREAMS where the added "R" covers human qualities such as reflection, responsibility, respect, resiliency. The added "S" symbolizes one's spiritual self. The concept of STREAMS emerged from a research study that sought a definition of spiritual development for young children. In this workshop, Loose Parts will be examined as a concrete tool for bringing ideas of spiritual flourishing into mainstream ECE. Loose parts are easily available, support identity formation, often help children to understand and accept differences, challenges, and are capable of building resiliency. Thus, loose parts offer a practical way to bring concepts of spiritual flourishing to children, educators, and parents.