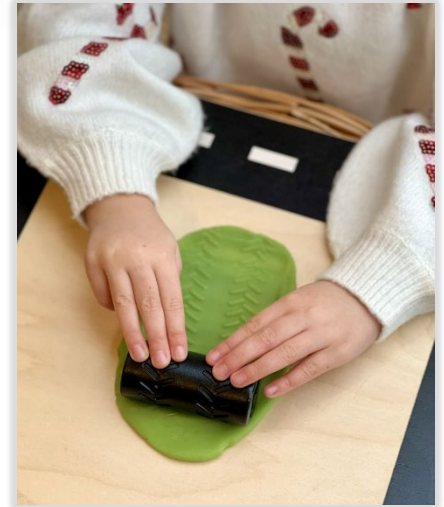


Children are fascinated with things that move, so using these fun rollers is a great way to explore different modes of transport. Children will love making vehicle tracks and trails in play dough and other materials, and as they do, they will be developing their fine motor skills – vital for early mark making and writing. Each of the tracks is also a different shape – encouraging the children to move their finger over the track will open up conversations about patterns and directions, which again will link to pre-writing mark making and letter shapes.

Let's roll

Children will enjoy trying out the rollers independently, but guiding them through the early stages will help them get to grips with them:



- The easiest way to use a roller is to roll it away from you. When they've rolled a track or trail, children can use the stamp at the end of the roller to add the vehicle or pedestrian.
- The next step is learning to roll across the body. As well as encouraging children to apply equal pressure laterally, this action will challenge them to cross the midline and develop motor skills important for learning to write.
- Talk about how hard the child has to press down with the roller to make the track come out well. What happens to the track or trail when they press harder or more gently?

- What does the track feel like when they run their finger over it?
- Explore using the rollers with different substrates, such as clay, kinetic sand, sand dough or cloud dough. This will encourage children to adapt their rolling technique, pressing harder when necessary and developing their motor skills.



Vehicles on a roll

Provide the rollers and dough on a suitable surface for children to explore independently. You could also provide:

- Printed pictures or toy vehicles for children to match to the tracks they make
- Houses, vehicles, people figures, trees or animals to turn the track they've rolled into a landscape and open up the potential for storytelling. For example, who made the track down the busy street? Where were they going? Were they in a hurry?
- Paper for children to draw their own vehicle tracks.
- Books about transport.



Talk about things that go

The rollers are great for prompting plenty of transport talk:

- Which of these vehicles have children been in before?
- How fast do they go?
- What noises do they make?
- How many wheels do they have?
- Why are there two tracks on the car and tractor rollers? Why is there only one track on the bike roller, even though it has two wheels?
- When a child has rolled a track and added the vehicle, ask where it's travelling to.
- When they roll a footprint trail, how many footprints can they count?
- When they roll a bike track, how many corners are there? Did the bike turn to the right or the left?
- Have the children ever seen a tractor tyre track in real life? Maybe they've jumped from bump to bump! Why do tractors need such big bumps (or tread) on their tyres?
- Have children ever noticed the white lines (contrails) left in the sky by an aeroplane? Can you see any in the sky now? Where could they be flying to?
- If there's mud around, have fun making footprints with your wellies! Can the children spot any shapes in the patterns they leave?
- Which tracks might you see in the countryside? Which ones might you find in a town or city?



Caring for our world

The rollers are also useful for beginning to talk about how we can care for our world by choosing how we travel. Keep the ideas simple and positive so the children can understand them:

- Have the children ever been near a busy road and noticed the smell from the car exhaust fumes? These fumes make the air around us less clean. Can they think of any ways of travelling that don't produce fumes?
 - Can any of the children ride a bike? If you're going a short distance, why might it be good to choose to go by bike or on foot, rather than in the car? As well as talking about the environmental impact, you could also discuss how it's good for our bodies to be active.
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- How many people do the children think can fit on a train? You could talk about how going on a long journey by train uses less fuel than if all the passengers were to go by car.
 - Use the rollers and tracks to create a simple graph showing how the children travel to the setting. You could use play figures or counters to represent each child.

Get talking – useful words

Track, trail, contrail, tread, wheel, tyre, engine, pedals, bumpy, smooth

Rolling action: roll, push, stamp, away, towards, across, roll gently, press harder

Prepositional language: above, below, next to, underneath, on top of, inside

Books about transport

Amazing Machines series by Tony Mitton

Duck in the Truck series by Jez Alborough

Look Inside Things That Go by Rob Lloyd Jones

The Ultimate Book of Vehicles from Around the World by Didier Balicevic