

**BETTER · KID · CARE**

## Distance Education Lesson



# Working with Wood – Kids Can Do It!

Professional Development Code K2C1  
Child Development Associate CDA 5

[www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu)



Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D., Better Kid Care Program Director

Supported and produced with funds from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, a joint office of the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare, and The Penn State Cooperative Extension Better Kid Care Program. 341 North Science Park Road - Suite 208, State College, PA 16803; Phone 1-800-452-9108. Web site: [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu).

**PENNSTATE**



Cooperative Extension  
*College of Agricultural Sciences*

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801, Tel (814) 865-4700/V, (814) 863-1150/TTY.

Copyright © 2011 The Pennsylvania State University

## Lesson Instructions

1. Watch the educational DVD.
2. Read the workbook.
3. Complete all assessment pages and forms in ink. Save a copy of all completed work for your files in case there is a need to refer to your saved copy. We do not return incomplete lessons. You will be notified if lessons are incomplete.
4. We encourage the use of distance education lessons in staff meetings; however, all assessments need to be completed independently. Copied answers, "does not apply" answers, N/A answers, or blank answers are all considered incomplete.
5. Mail the following to the Better Kid Care office for review:
  - Completed assessment pages (not the handouts)
  - Registration form
  - Evaluation form
  - Payment form and payment or coupon
  - Tell Us More About You page
6. Our address:
 

Better Kid Care Program  
 Distance Education Lessons  
 341 North Science Park Road - Suite 208  
 State College, PA 16803

### Please note:

- Completed assessments must arrive at the Penn State Better Kid Care office for processing at least 6 weeks before your certification or registration renewal due date.
- Completed assessments will be reviewed and returned to you with a certificate of completion.
- You will receive two professional development hours for successful completion of this lesson.
- Penn State University Better Kid Care Distance Education provides:
  - Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
  - Keystone STARS professional development
  - PA Dept. of Public Welfare required hours
  - Act 48 hours for certified educators
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) credential hours
- The DVD portion of this lesson was originally a satellite presentation. Please be aware that some contact information may have changed and phone in numbers may not be in service.
- Discussion questions can be used by a group of staff members in a child care center or group home, or to help spark discussion among families.

# Working with Wood – Kids Can Do It!

## Distance Education

### Lesson Overview

.....

This lesson introduces children to working with wood and helping children learn about tools—what they are, how to use them safely and properly, and then how to use them on different materials. Discover how easy it is to introduce working with wood to your child care program.

## Distance Education

### Lesson Objectives

.....

- Participants in this distance education lesson will be able to give three reasons why woodworking is valuable for young children.
- Participants in this distance education lesson will be able to give three safety rules to use with children when woodworking.
- Participants in this distance education lesson will learn how to provide woodworking experiences to children of various ages and developmental stages.

## Why is Working with Wood So Good for Kids?

### Woodworking...

- Gives them valuable life skills
- Gives them a real sense of accomplishment
- Gives them an opportunity to be creative
- Can lead to greater self-confidence
- Can improve eye-hand coordination
- Can improve small and large muscle control
- Gives kids an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills
- Can give them a chance to solve real math and science problems
- Helps kids compare and contrast size and shape
- Helps them learn how to measure
- Helps them learn how to plan ahead
- Can increase vocabulary and language skills
- Helps children who are interested in superhero play feel powerful in a new and positive way
- Helps children learn new skills for working together



So put aside your worries and just try it!

## Making Woodworking Safe

Most adults are afraid to let children use real tools because they are afraid that children will get hurt. While it is true that children may get hurt when using tools, injuries take place in other activities as well. And there are many things that you can do to help ensure that woodworking is safe.

### Keep your woodworking area well organized



Create a proper place for the tools and teach children to put the tools back where they belong, in a box or on a table. Create a space to store projects that are being worked on over time, and limit the number of children who can work in the area so that there is plenty of working space for each child.

Make it easy for children to find the tools they need.

### Teach children how to use each tool

Take the time to show how to use each tool. If you are not comfortable or experienced using tools, ask a parent to come in and show children how to use the tools. Use reminders to show children the best ways to hold a tool. For example, you can mark a hammer with tape to show children the best place to hold the handle, or put up a sign that shows safe ways to hold tools.

### Safety Goggles are a MUST

Make safety goggles available for each child who will be working with wood.

It is important that the goggles wrap around and have air vents so that they won't become fogged. Swimming goggles or masks can be used as well.

### A strong and stable work surface

A workbench or a table is fine, but make sure that the work surface is level and child-sized. An old table that is cut down to about 25" works well. You can increase the stability by placing the work surface up against a wall to prevent movement. Here are some possibilities for a work surface:

- Child-sized table or old table cut to child size
- Sturdy crate
- Thick wooden planks nailed to two wooden crates
- To muffle the sound, try putting the work surface on a carpet.



# BETTER · KID · CARE

## Tool Rules

The best way to teach the children rules is to talk about the rules frequently— before, during, and after woodworking. Start each woodworking session with a discussion of the rules.

Ask the children for their own ideas about how to keep safe. Their ideas will help you to better understand their knowledge of safety and to develop new safety rules.

1. Wear safety goggles. Tell children the reason (to protect your eyes)
2. Handle tools carefully. Tell children the reason (they are sharp and heavy)
3. Always ask a grownup for help. Tell children the reason (a grownup needs to watch them work)
4. Tools must stay in the woodworking area. Tell the children the reason (real tools are for working with wood, while plastic tools are for playing with)
5. Take turns — Only two children at a time in the woodworking area. Tell children the reason (a grownup needs to watch them work and help them if they ask)
6. Ask for a tool if you need one. Tell the children the reason (you can hurt yourself if you grab a tool)
7. Please walk when you are in the tool area. Tell the children the reason (if you run you might fall and hurt yourself on the tools)
8. While waiting for your turn, you can play in another area or watch the woodworkers from behind the tape on the floor. Tell the children the reason (so watchers don't bump into workers)
9. Carry and hold all tools by their handles. Tell the children the reason (your hands may get hurt on the sharp parts of tools if you do not use the handles)
10. Use tools at home only with a grownup's help. Tell the children the reason (children need grownup help at home and at the child care home or center to use tools.)



## Reading About Woodworking

Reading about woodworking can be as much fun as doing it! Try your local library for some great books about tools and woodworking.

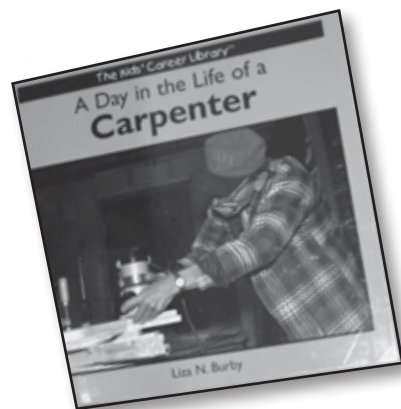
Here are some books about woodworking to share with the children:

Tool Book, by Gail Gibbons, Holiday House, New York (1982)

Workshop, by Andrew Clements and David Wisniewski, Clarion, New York (1999)

Tools, by Ann Morris, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York (1992)

Read these books to the children, then keep them available for the children to read in your woodworking area.



---

## Woodworking for Young Children

There is no need for a fancy project for children under the age of five. They just really enjoy handling the tools and the wood and are often more satisfied with a piece of scrap wood with holes that they have drilled themselves than they are with a birdhouse project. The best way to introduce children to the excitement of building things with wood is to teach them how to use a few simple hand tools safely: hammer, c-clamp, saw, and drill (brace and bit is easier to use than a drill with an eggbeater-style handle), and then giving them some scrap wood to work on. The power of their imagination will turn these objects into wonderful projects, when they decide that the scraps have been transformed into a truck or an airplane. The fun of woodworking for young children is in the doing and not in creating a fabulous finished product.

The pleasures of woodworking can start early.

***Ones and twos*** can begin learning about woodworking by playing with plastic tools. Through this they learn the names of common tools and begin to understand how they are used. Many children of this age enjoy watching adults working with tools and imitating them in their play. By the time children are two they can begin creating their own sculptures out of scrap wood, glue, and paint.

***By the age of three***, most children are capable of learning how to use some basic hand tools, like hammers, saws, and drills. Most children of this age can understand the safety rules but require close adult supervision so that they will remember to follow them. This is the best time to teach them how to use the tool properly. Show them how to hold a tool by the handle. You can mark where to hold the handle with a piece of tape—children will often hold the handle up close and will over time learn how to hold the hammer farther

## BETTER · KID · CARE

back to get more leverage. Put a piece of tape around the handle of a saw to remind children not to hold the blade of the saw.

Good activities for threes involve just using the tools to cut soft wood like pine or balsa, twigs, dried pieces of clay, paper towel rolls, and the cardboard found inside a fabric bolt (which you can ask for at your local fabric store). Simply drilling and hammering in scrap wood is also very interesting to children at this age.

Pounding nails is a simple activity that young children thoroughly enjoy. All you need is an old tree stump and 1 1/4" roofing nails. Roofing nails are a good choice because they have large heads and are short—this makes them easier to hit and it doesn't take too many hammer blows to sink them into a stump.

Another satisfying way to use a hammer is to use colored thumb tacks in soft wood scraps. You can also give children styrofoam covered with burlap and golf tees and a plastic hammer and let them hammer the golf tees just like nails. Children also enjoy sanding wood. Give them a block of wood covered with a piece of sandpaper and let them sand the wood scraps. There is no need to make a project with this age—just give them plenty of interesting things to glue onto their work, like bottle caps, small tiles, wooden spoons, etc., along with some paint. Children will feel very satisfied with their creations.

***By the age of four and five,*** children continue to improve their hand tool skills. With patience many children at four can cut through thicker pieces of wood. Japanese saws that cut on the pull stroke are easier to use than saws that cut when you push. Do not ask children of this age to follow models of projects. At four and five, children have many of their own ideas and become frustrated if their project does not match the ideal. It is better to let them create whatever they like. Try saying, "Tell me about what you've made." This will get kids talking and you'll discover that the mass of glue and wood and nails is a car, boat, or airplane. Simple projects that the children can create in their own way by gluing wood pieces together and painting are the most successful for this age.

***By seven and eight,*** children begin to be more interested in creating projects. But the key to successful woodworking with children is give them plenty of ways to make the project their own creation. Paint and glue let children make something one of a kind. Give children paper and pencil and talk with them about making plans for a woodworking project. This encourages children to think ahead and plan their own project. But don't be too concerned if the plans and the finished product don't have much in common. It's the idea of thinking ahead and a way of getting started that really matters. Remember, the fun is in the doing and in designing a project that is uniquely your own.

## Discussion Questions

1. Do you use tools yourself?
2. Do you wish you knew how to use tools better?
3. What experiences did you have with tools as a child?
4. Who does the minor repairs around your home?
5. What are your concerns about the safety of using tools?
6. Do you believe that using tools can be good for the development of young children?
7. Why is learning to use tools a valuable life skill for children?
8. What practical tips did you learn from the video about using tools with young children?
9. Why is it important to not worry about having your child make a finished product?
10. How has watching this video changed your ideas about woodworking and young children?

# PARENTS COUNT

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



### Family Fun with Woodworking

The pleasures of woodworking can start early.

**One- and two-year-olds** can begin learning about woodworking by playing with plastic tools. Through this play they learn the names of common tools and begin to understand how they are used. Many children of this age enjoy watching adults working with tools and imitating them in their play. By the time children are two, they can begin creating their own sculptures out of scrap wood, glue, and paint.

**By the age of three**, most children can learn how to use some basic hand tools, such as hammers, saws, and drills. Most children of this age can understand the safety rules but require close adult supervision so that they will remember to follow them. This is the best time to teach children how to use the tool properly. Show them how to hold a tool by the handle. If you mark where to hold the handle of a hammer with a piece of tape, for example, children can hold the handle far enough back from the head. A piece of tape around a saw handle reminds children not to hold the blade. Good activities for threes involve using the tools to cut, hammer, and drill wood scraps. A good and simple activity is to give children roofing nails that are short with large heads to hammer into an old tree stump; or give children styrofoam, golf tees, and a plastic hammer and let them hammer the golf tees just like nails. Children also



enjoy sanding wood — give them a block of wood covered with sandpaper and let them sand the wood scraps. There is no need to make a project with this age because children feel as satisfied with a block of wood filled with drill holes as they do with a fancy bird feeder.

**At age four and five**, children continue to improve their hand tool skills. With patience and guidance, many four-year-olds can cut through pieces of wood. Japanese saws that cut on the pull stroke are easier to use than saws that cut on the push. It is important not to ask children of this age to follow models of projects. At four and five, children have many of their own ideas and become frustrated if their project doesn't match the ideal.

It's better to let them create whatever they like. Try saying, "Tell me about what you made." This will get kids talking and you'll discover that the mass of glue and wood and nails is a car, boat, or airplane. But simple projects that the children can create in their own way by gluing wood pieces together and painting are the most successful for this age.

**Seven- and eight-year-old** children begin to be more interested in creating projects. But the key to successful woodworking with this age is give the children plenty of ways to make the project their own creation. Paint and glue let them make something one-of-a-kind. Remember, the fun is in the doing. When your child has fun creating with wood, you are helping to give them the joy of creativity.

## Songs to Sing Together

### Enjoy “Johnny Works with One Hammer” with your child.

Johnny works with one hammer  
*(pretend to hammer with one fist)*

One hammer, one hammer,  
Johnny works with one hammer

Now he works with two.  
*(pretend to hammer with two fists)*

#### Continue with

Three hammers  
*(use two fists, one foot)*

Four hammers  
*(use two fists, two feet)*

Five hammers  
*(use two fists, two feet, nod head)*

Then he goes to sleep.  
*(Close eyes, put head on folded hands)*

## Reading about Woodworking

Reading about woodworking can be as fun as doing it! Try your local library for some great books about tools and woodworking:

Tool Book, by Gail Gibbons, Holiday House, New York (1982)

Workshop, by Andrew Clements and David Wisniewski (1999)

Tools, by Ann Morris, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York (1992)

### For adults:

When children are old enough to enjoy creating projects, try these books with some simple ideas. Remember, letting your kids jazz up their projects and make them unique is more important than a finished project that looks just like the picture in a book.

Try Woodworking with Kids, by Richard Starr, Taunton Press, Newtown, CT (1990) or Build it Together, by Katie and Gene Hamilton, Stackpole, Mechanicsburg, PA (1994). These two books are filled with appealing projects.

## Making Woodworking Safe

Most adults are afraid to let children use real tools because they are afraid that children will get hurt. While it is true that children may get hurt when using tools, there is much that you can do to make woodworking safe.

### Keep your woodworking area well organized.

Create a proper place for the tools, and teach your child to put the tools back where they belong. Making it easy for children to find

the tools they need will help to cut down on accidents.

### Teach proper tool use.

Take the time to demonstrate how to use each tool. If you’re not comfortable or experienced using tools, you might ask a friend to show you and your child how to use the tools.

### Safety goggles are a must.

Make safety goggles available for your child. It is important that the goggles wrap around and have air

vents so that they won’t become fogged. Swimming goggles or masks can be used as well.

### Teach your child which tools can be used only by an adult.

All power tools, chain saws, and blow torches are for adults only. As children gain confidence with tools, they often believe they can use any tool safely. Stress that children must never use tools for grown-ups.

# Assessment

---

Name
Address
City/State/ZIP
County
Phone Number

BKC OFFICE USE ONLY

**1. Give three reasons why woodworking is valuable for young children.**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. List at least three safety rules to use with children when doing woodwork.**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. A project like making a bird feeder is more appropriate for elementary school age children who are developmentally ready to plan and create a product. What kinds of woodworking experiences using tools are appropriate for younger children?**

---

---

---

---

## Assessment *(continued)*

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What five pieces of basic equipment are valuable for woodworking with young children?**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. What two experiences would be good for children who are not ready to use real tools?**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Why is it valuable to give children many types of accessories or a variety of materials to decorate their projects?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Tell Us More About You

Since we can't meet face to face, we are interested in knowing more about you. This information is very helpful to the early education specialists who review your assessment. Please return this sheet with your assessment pages.

1. Which of the following best describes you?

- I provide child care in my own home
- I provide child care in someone else's home
- I work in a child care center
- I'm thinking about becoming a child care professional
- Other, please describe

---

---

2. How long have you been a child care professional? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the ages of the children in your care? Check all that apply.

- Birth to 12 months
- 13-24 months
- 25-36 months
- 3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9 years and over
- Special needs

4. Please feel free to tell us a little about yourself and/or the work you do with children.

---

---

---

---

5. Other comments (please use the back of this page if necessary).

---

---

---

---

**Thank you for taking the time to help us make a connection to you  
and for being part of our program!**