



# How-To Guide

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## Cable Spool Tables

Cable spool tables provide diverse opportunities for individual and small group activities throughout the outdoor learning environment. Whether supporting dramatic play, loose parts play, arts and crafts, sensory play, or gardening, to name a few, cable spool tables are an affordable and durable way to add color and opportunities for learning throughout the space.



**ECHO**

EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH OUTDOORS

### Duration



1/2 Day

### # of People



2 - 10

### Required Effort



Fairly Simple



Photo: National Wildlife Federation (NWF)



Photo: NWF

## Materials

- Wooden cable spools
- Durable, non-toxic outdoor spray paint (**3 cans per spool**)
- Durable, non-toxic brush-on outdoor paint
- Non-toxic, water-based wood sealant
- Heavy grit sand paper (40 - 60 grit)
- Access to power
- (Optional) Stencils – shapes, animals, letters or numbers
- (Optional) Chalkboard paint
- (Optional) Artificial turf
- (Optional) Heavy duty stapler



Photo: NWF

## Tools

- Gloves
- Nail pulling pliers
- Hammers
- Orbital power sanders
- Extension cords
- Paint brushes
- Sponges
- Paint rollers
- Paint trays
- Drop cloths
- (Optional) Sockets/wrenches to tighten any loose hardware
- (Optional) Wheelbarrow
- (Optional) Heavy duty scissors
- (Optional) Heavy duty stapler



Photo: NWF



Photo: NWF

# Implementation Steps

- 1 **Gather materials**
  - Check with electrical supply distributors, Craigslist, etc.
- 2 **Prep**
  - Remove any non-essential, or re-secure hardware (i.e. nails, screws, bolts, etc.).
  - Sand/bevel any sharp edges and splintery areas.

- 3 **Paint**
  - Use your imagination!
  - Look up 'cable spool play tables' (Google images, Pinterest, etc.) for inspiration.

OR

- Weatherproof**
  - Use the water-based wood sealant to slow the affects of weather and use over time.

- 4 **Place in desired locations**
  - Once paint is fully dry, place spools where you want them and make sure they are stable and not wobbly.



Photo: NWF



Photo: NWF

# Considerations

- Chalkboard paint on spool tops can be an added element of fun!
- Painting with brushes and sponges is a great opportunity to include preschoolers and/or older siblings.
- Really beat up or worn spool top surfaces can be wrapped with artificial turf. (See image to the right)



Photo: NWF





Cover photo credit:  
NWF

## Disclaimer

*Before installing new play and learning components in your outdoor learning and play space, please check with local regulatory agencies to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements. While the intent is to provide a general resource for reconnecting children to nature, the authors and program sponsor disclaim any liability based upon this information. PLAE Inc. assumes no responsibility for the design or installation of outdoor components for play and learning. In no event will PLAE Inc. be liable for any loss or damage including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage incurred during the construction or use of the outdoor learning environment.*

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[www.plaeinc.org/ECHO](http://www.plaeinc.org/ECHO)