

Cooperative Ramp Play Materials:

- Outdoor Ramps
- Balls, water, and sand
- Shovels, buckets, containers
- Elevation Materials (overturned containers, rocks, sand bags, buckets, etc.)

Outdoor Ramp play is the perfect opportunity to support social-emotional skills. During construction with ramps, children must work together toward a common goal. There are many obstacles and challenges that come along with collaboratively designing a ramp course. For instance, ramps must be connected and move a material, such as water or sand, in a desired direction. The structure will need support and elevation. When children design, construct, and problem solve they use many interpersonal skills and have opportunity to practice self-regulation strategies. You may observe:

- Language skills
- Listening to others' ideas
- Turn-taking
- Flexibility
- Perseverance

Teaching Tips

- Support children in taking turns and listening to one another. For some communication skills come naturally. Others will need support. Invite children to try each idea systematically until the solution is reached. Or have them draw their ideas before they begin construction. Encourage them to make one large collaborative drawing and then follow it as a map.
- Avoid the words, "Good job", but do point out when social skills are working. "Looks like taking turns worked well for your team!"
- Not all problems will be solved during the time you have allotted for play. Encourage perseverance by revisiting construction over many play periods. "Let's make a list of things that worked and things that didn't and we can return to this tomorrow."
- Children are innate problem solvers. Sometimes they just need a jumping off point. If you notice the children have reached an impasse or are becoming frustrated with a recurring problem in the ramp course, ask them an open-ended question to spark engineering thinking.

Questions to pose:

- What do you want to have happen?
- What have you tried together so far?
- What other materials have you tried? Can try?
- What is happening along this section of the ramp course? Why?