

Let's Roll Dinosaurs allows you to build on children's fascination with these prehistoric giants and encourage the development of fine motor skills, vital for early mark making and writing. There will be lots to discuss as well, as you explore both dinosaurs and the world they inhabited.

Dinosaurs on a 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 – creating a long playdough scene (facing sideways). When they've rolled the landscape, you can turn the piece of playdough round so it faces the child. They can then use the stamp at the end of the roller to complete the scene.
- 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 landscape come out well. What happens to the picture when they press harder or more gently?
- What does the landscape 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.
- Provide the rollers and dough on a suitable surface for children to explore independently.



Dino discoveries

The rollers link beautifully with dinosaur-themed play:

- Lots of children are experts at identifying different dinosaurs! After rolling the scenes and adding stamps, can they spot the Tyrannosaurus rex, Spinosaurus, Diplodocus, Triceratops or Stegosaurus?
- Can they match the dinosaurs they've rolled with printed pictures, dinosaur figures or Dinosaur Wooden Characters?
- The rollers can form part of a dinosaur investigation table, alongside dinosaur figures or wooden characters, plus other artefacts, such as dinosaur bones, fossils, dinosaur teeth or Dinosaur Footprint Stones. To encourage children to examine these closely and record what they see, provide magnifying glasses, clipboards and sorting trays, as well as a selection of books about dinosaurs.

Dinosaur adventures

Children will enjoy creating scenes and telling the story of what is happening. Encourage them to make longer stories by joining their rolled play dough scene with one created by another child. How many scenes can they join together to make a story. Which scene would be best at the start? Which scene would they like at the end?

Dino discussions

Once you've used the rollers and stamps to create dinosaur scenes, there's so much to talk about:

Tyrannosaurus rex

- How did the T-rex move around?
- What did its roar sound like?
- What could it be chasing?
- What might it eat?

Spinosaurus

- Where did Spinosaurus live?
- Why do you think it's called 'Spinosaurus'? Have a look at its back!
- What is it catching from the water?

Diplodocus

- How big was a Diplodocus? (Up to about 30m long!)
- What did it eat?

Triceratops

- How many horns did a Triceratops have?
- What did it eat?
- What can you spot in the background?



Stegosaurus

- What did a Stegosaurus have on its back. How many can you see?
- What did it eat?

Dinosaur hatchlings

- What is hatching out of the eggs? What is it like?
- What type of dinosaur do you think it is?
- Which other animals lay eggs?

Get talking – useful words

Predator, prey, hunt, track, hatch, spines, horns, carnivore, herbivore, extinct, fossil

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 dinosaurs

Stomp, Chomp, Big Roars! Here Come the Dinosaurs! by Kaye Umansky

Harry and the Dinosaurs series by Ian Whybrow

Tyrannosaurus Drip by Julia Donaldson

The Girl and the Dinosaur by Hollie Hughes