

[Train Play with Old Tracks, New Tricks](#)

Trains and train tracks are a staple in many toddler and preschool classrooms, mine included. They are not only fun to play with, but they are also very helpful when we are dealing with [separation anxiety](#) or need something to [calm our environment](#). Recently our block area was transformed into **train play with [Old Tracks, New Tricks](#)**, a new book written by Jessica Petersen. We gathered all the wooden tracks we owned (we've had many considerate parents throughout the years who have donated what they no longer use) and our huge tub of Duplos (again, donated by many parents over the years). I watched as our preschoolers worked together to construct pillars and ramps, buildings and walls, all inspired by the book.



Full disclosure: I was provided a copy of [Old Tracks, New Tricks](#) for review. This post contains affiliate links for your convenience.

Train Play with Old Tracks, New Tricks

I introduced the book [Old Tracks, New Tricks](#) during our [morning meeting](#). As I read it to our preschoolers, I gave them plenty of time to absorb what they saw on each page. When we saw how bossy the trains were to the 3 new tracks, we paused to talk about feelings. How did it make the new tracks feel when they were treated that way? But then the new tracks decided not to let those trains bother them. Instead, they got creative. The other tracks got involved, and eventually the trains wanted to be part of the fun. We watched what happened

when the trains and the tracks had to work together and how they were rewarded with lots of fun. We compared it to how we work together on classroom activities.

Old Tracks, New Tricks Activity

I love getting the preschoolers involved in decisions. We knew we wanted to add trains to our block area after reading Old Tracks, New Tricks, but what would we put with them? We once again looked at the photos in the book and decided that we definitely needed Duplos. LOTS of Duplos.



We decided to pull our gigantic plastic tub of assorted Duplo pieces out of the storage closet and add it to our block area. We filled another basket with trains. We were eager to get to work!



The preschoolers began stacking the Duplos, figuring out which tracks would need support. A lot of collaboration happened while the bricks were moved around, especially once the tracks were involved.



“How can we raise the tracks?”

This was the first question that led to some pillars.



Some of the tracks were completely substituted with Duplos.

“The trains can still travel across them.”



Structures were also made alongside the tracks, as walls and buildings.



I love activities such as this because they encourage children to think of alternative ways to use materials. It's also a great way to revive old toys, putting them to new use.



More About the Book:

Old Tracks, New Tricks is written by Jessica Petersen, who blogs at [Play Trains](#), and published by [The Innovation Press](#). The rhyming text is fun to read as children predict the last words in each line. Jessica includes ideas to spiff up your wooden train tracks, such as with foil and even glow-in-the-dark materials for nighttime fun! The photos are bright and fun, showing off lots of different ways to customize your tracks. While writing the book, Jessica kept in mind all the stages of the train lover, from toddlers to preschoolers and older.

Want to see more? The Innovation Press has provided a [free preview of the first ten pages!](#)



More ideas for kids:

