

BUILDING BLOCKS

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested play activity. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



STEM Concept(s): Design, Evaluate, Spatial positioning, Measurement, Structure & properties of materials

Stack them up! Knock them down! Learning how to build with blocks is a great way for your child to learn about **testing and improving designs**, and how to solve problems. Provide a variety of blocks of **different sizes, textures, and weights/thickness** for the child to **investigate building** towers, buildings, mazes, and/or bridges.

STEM IDEAS/WORDS

- Measurement (length, weight, size)
- Compare & Contrast
- Spatial positioning (top, bottom, front, behind, above, under, next to)
- Textures

MATERIALS

- Variety of blocks (size, color, texture, material)

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- *What would happen if you stack this block on top of that block?*
- *Which block tower is taller? Shorter? Wider?*
- *How high can we build with these blocks?*
- *What would happen if we stacked a big block on top of a small block?*



BUILDING BLOCKS ADAPTATIONS

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ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise & distractions
- Place objects within reach
- Use a reacher or grabber to pick up the block off the floor

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor/grasping needs, consider using tools/assistive devices (e.g., grabber, reacher, Velcro strap)
- Provide a variety of blocks (e.g., cardboard, Legos, wood, soft/fabric. big/small)

INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Model and demonstrate how to interact with blocks
- Use hand-over-hand or hand-under-hand to support building with blocks
- Allow longer waiting time for child to respond and/or process this activity



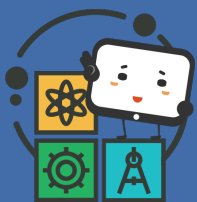
Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- Record how tall each tower is
- Talk with the child about which building structures seemed the sturdiest. Encourage the child to document their plans in some way.
- Set up small obstacles and challenges for children, such as trying to put a round object (e.g., ball) on the tower and support problem-solving around the obstacle.
- Model specific structures (like a bridge with 3 blocks) and see if the child can imitate it.
- Check out these great books about blocks:
 - *When I Build With Blocks* by Niki Alling
 - *Blocks* by Irene Dickson
 - *The Blocks Come Out at Night* by Javier Garay
 - *Bigger! Bigger!* by Leslie Patricelli

