

Playing Together with Blocks

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While constructing with blocks, children expand their creative sense through experimentation, persistence, and problem-solving, i.e., science and math skills. In building with others, they develop social and communication skills and cooperation. There are many benefits while exploring blocks. Here are a few furthering ideas:

- Build tall, wide, long, narrow, short, etc. constructions. Label the results. Then knock down or break apart the creation. Destruction becomes part of the fun. And that's okay!
- Together describe similarities and differences between blocks and buildings.
- Separate the blocks by color, size or shape. Count the number in each group. *Which pile has the most? The least? The biggest blocks?*
- Allow the child to create something on their own. Ask, *What do you call that? How can it be used?* When it feels okay to alter their product, ask, *What happens if I move this over here?* Mistakes are part of the process, it's how we learn. Admit, *Oops! That didn't work. Let's try again.*
- Give a child directions to build something step-by-step. E.g., *Put a large green block on top of a small yellow block.* Provide the prompts *first, then, and last.*
- Ask the child to give you building directions. Purposefully place a block in the wrong place to make an unstable structure. Ask for help to solve the problem.
- Add animals, figures, or other small toys into the play with blocks. Place the animals in different spots, using prepositions (location words).
- Together discuss the process or create a story about the resulting structure.
- Pretend blocks are vehicles. Follow the child's lead around a pretend place.
- Find a picture of a structure in a magazine. Try to duplicate it.



Creating together can be fun!

It can also provide an idea for how a child is thinking.

