



## THE BLOCK AREA: MORE THAN JUST BLOCKS

When was the last time you added new items or changed some of the items in your block area? Are the same set of blocks there since September? Are the children getting bored? Did you know there is a progression to block play? For young children it is best to introduce just a few block shape and sizes at the start of the year. Then, as children become comfortable with building and putting the blocks away you can begin adding additional shapes and sizes and other materials.

### Stages of Block Play

#### Stage 1:

**Carrying blocks:** Young children with limited experience playing with blocks will carry blocks, pile them, learning the properties of how they feel and how heavy they are and gain an understanding of what they can do with them.

#### Stage 2:

**Piling Blocks and making roads:** At this stage children begin to use their imagination by piling blocks in different arrangements to make towers or to make roads. Children in this stage are more deliberate play, experimenting and problem solving. Add props to the block area, such as cars and trucks

#### Stage 3:

**Connecting blocks to make structures:** During this stage children expand their construction techniques to make bridges, enclosures and designs. With their improved eye-hand coordination they explore spatial relationships and balance.

#### Stage 4:

**Making elaborate structures:** Children in this stage often create artistic and complex structures and will often use them as settings for dramatic play. During this stage children need a variety of block sizes and shapes.



[Language & Literacy](#)

When you talk with children about what they are building you help expand their vocabulary by introducing them to new words. Find books related to their questions such as books about houses, farms, roads and construction. Place writing tools and paper in the block area so children can make signs for their buildings. On the shelves use labels with words and pictures.



[Math](#)

Ask number questions such as "How many small blocks do you need to make it as long as this big one?" Teach number concepts during clean up: "Everyone should take three blocks at a time to put away." Point out patterns children have made in their constructions. Make a shape label for each block on the shelf to help with clean up and to reinforce geometry concepts. Help children measure how tall or long their structures are using rulers or string or measuring tape.

### Get Creative with The Block Area

Cardboard, Foam, Solid and Hollow Wood, Plastic Blocks

PVC Pipes and Planks

Traffic Signs

Blueprints

Measuring Tape, Rulers, and Protractors

Toilet Paper and Paper Towel Rolls

Pulleys and String/Rope

Clipboards, Pencils, and Paper

Books, Postcards and Magazines with Pictures of Buildings and Bridges

Shells, Pebbles, and Rocks

Sticks and Small Logs

Animals, People and Furniture