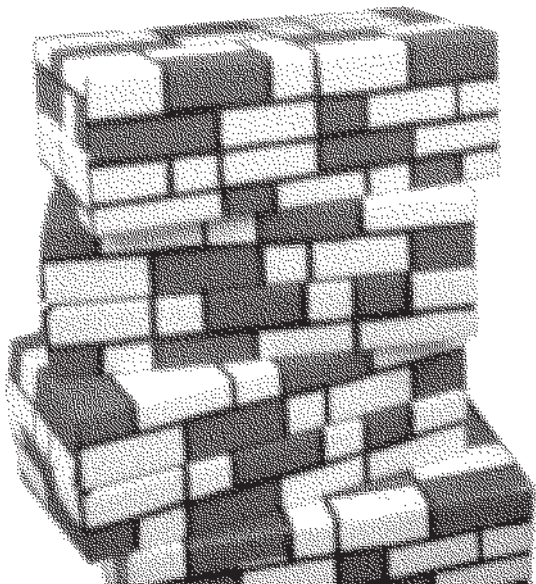


Stages of Block Play³

- STAGE 1-** Blocks are carried around and are not used in construction.
- STAGE 2-** Building begins. Rows are made either vertically (stacking) or horizontally (on the floor).
- STAGE 3-** Stage 3 involves a great deal of repetition, but bridging also takes place. Bridging consists of two blocks with a space between them, connected by a third block.
- STAGE 4-** Enclosures are constructed. Enclosures are four blocks placed in such a way that they enclose a space.
- STAGE 5-** Decorative patterns begin to appear. Much symmetry is seen, but the structures are not named yet.
- STAGE 6-** Structures are named for use in dramatic play. The names relate to how the structure will be used.
- STAGE 7-** Buildings often reproduce or symbolize actual structures with which the children are familiar. There is also a great deal of dramatic play around the block structures.



BUILDING WITH BLOCKS²

Recommended Shapes, Types, & Number of Blocks

- Babies** *↳ Blockbusters as planned*
- Toddlers to Twos** *↳ 12 Blockbusters*
- Threes** *↳ 60 to 70 unit blocks using 7 to 12 shapes*
- Fours & Fives** *↳ 100 to 150 unit blocks using 19 to 27 shapes*

THROUGH BLOCKS, *a child...*

- ✓ *has opportunity to use his large muscles.*
- ✓ *chooses sizes and shapes.*
- ✓ *learns to use his own ideas.*
- ✓ *learns to make decisions.*
- ✓ *begins to recognize the rights of others.*

—Tommy Sanders, 1994



TIPS FOR THE BLOCK Center¹

- 1. Keep it simple.**
- 2. Keep it spacious.**
- 3. Use low shelves for storage.**
- 4. May use shelves to separate the center from other parts of the room.**
- 5. May use a low-pile area rug or carpet to build on.** (Use a non-skid liner under rug.)
- 6. Set building boundaries. Use colorful tape lines to indicate areas for building.**
- 7. Limit the number of children in the area.**
Teacher/Director is needed to guide younger preschoolers.
- 8. Enhance Bible teaching and inspire building by using pictures.**
- 9. Ideal Setup**
 - A.** Store blocks and accessories on shelves by using items with matching shapes for easy cleanup. (Storage shelves need to be supported by a back). Match-up puzzle outlines can be cut from colorful construction paper and attached to the shelf with clear contact plastic. Store blocks from left to right and top to bottom. Begin with the smallest blocks in the upper left corner and work across the shelf in progression of size, eventually having the heaviest blocks on the bottom shelf. Place rectangles and triangles sideways so preschoolers can see their length.
 - B.** Display small items in clear plastic boxes that are outlined with simple shapes and labels.
 - C.** Mark off a parking area for large wooden trucks and cars with colorful tape. May use match-up puzzle outlines for these.
 - D.** Stand pictures against the wall at floor level. Pictures need to be seen easily by the child.
 - E.** Use a sign-up system or some other method to help children learn to take turns.
- 10. Make wooden blocks from hardwood and sand them smooth.**
- 11. Use other accessories like carpet squares, cardboard cylinders, smooth boards for ramps, hard hats (disinfected), fabric pieces, wallpaper and other home remodeling materials, toy traffic signs, transportation toys, sheets or blankets, 35mm film containers, and wooden spools.**

GUIDANCE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BLOCK CENTER²

Always build on the floor.

Guide a child to build no higher than his chin.

Build only in the block center.

Walk on the floor rather than on blocks (except for toddlers and Blockbusters) and pieces of wood used for building.

Build with the blocks rather than throwing, pushing, or kicking them.

Build far enough from the shelf (two or three feet away) to allow others to use the blocks.

Keep your hands on a car as you are making it go fast.

Allow only four friends in the block center at a time (or whatever limit you decide).

Never take blocks from someone else's building without permission.

You may knock down your own building but not someone else's.

Take turns with friends when using the blocks or toys.

Help clean up.

¹Learning Through Play "Blocks," Scholastic

²How to Guide Preschoolers, Strickland

³The Block Book, Hirsch