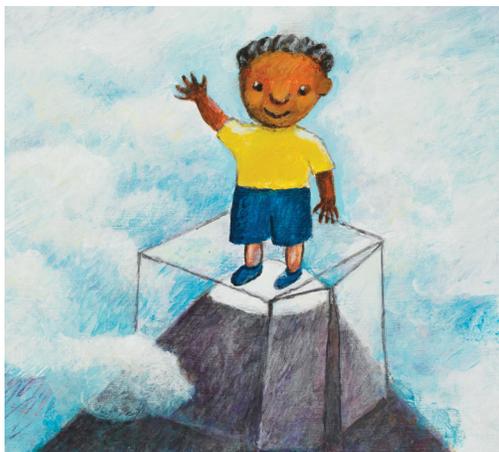




Talking about the Math around Us



Build a Tower Taller than You

Help children build math skills as they build towers! As they create their towers and compare heights, they will learn about sizes, shapes, and spatial relationships. Try this activity at home, in childcare programs, or at library story times.

Math: geometry (shapes, spatial relationships), measurement (height)

What you need

Recycled items in a variety of sizes and shapes, such as cereal and pasta boxes, butter and yogurt containers, and toilet paper tubes.

Directions

1. Introduce the challenge: build a tower taller than you.
2. Encourage children to experiment and talk about what they see and do.
 - "You put a *round* container *up* on top!"
 - "What happens if you replace the *middle* box with a *tube*?"
 - "Why did you put the *big* box on the *bottom*?"
3. Compare heights: is the tower taller than me?
 - "The tower is *shorter* than you. How can you make it *taller*?"
 - "How can you tell if the tower is *as tall as* you are?"
 - "See if you can make your tower *taller* without adding anything to it."

Talk Math!

Everyday math words are in bold italics.

Avoid questions with a right answer. Instead, ask children to explain their ideas.



Variations

Tabletop Towers. On a tabletop, build a tower taller than you when you're sitting. Then when you're standing!

Block It Up, Up, Up! Build with blocks instead of recycled materials. If possible, use blocks of various sizes and shapes.

Take Ten. Build the tallest tower you can with ten items. Then, use the same items to build the shortest tower.



Bright Ideas!

Homemade Building Kit. Include a variety of boxes (cereal, pasta, tissues, etc.); toilet paper and paper towel tubes; and plastic containers and jars to add challenge and fun to building!

Unbox Your Imagination. Children can turn boxes into buildings, robots, or machines! Just open the top, bottom, and seam of the box and turn it inside out. Glue or tape the box together again. Then let children decorate it.

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Pair this activity with these Star Bright Books titles to begin talking about the math around you!

