

Educational Background

Block play provides opportunities for children to explore math concepts, fine motor skills, and creativity through the element of design. Supporting block play encourages cognitive and language development through trial and error, and building an understanding of relationships between shapes. The *Build It* exhibit is a dedicated space that fosters the stages of block play:

1. Discovery of Block Attributes
2. Towers & Roads
3. Bridges
4. Enclosures
5. Patterns & Symmetry
6. Representational Building

* Based on *The Block Book*, edited by Elisabeth S. Hirsh (NAEYC, 1996, rev.ed).



Language Development – Providing experiences for children to build with blocks encourages vocabulary integration during play. Children can begin to name attributes of different blocks and engage in conversations with parents and other children describing what they are building and creating.



Motor Skills – Children practice grasping, holding, moving, and arranging various shapes and sizes of blocks. Children use fine motor skills by pinching or grabbing a block; gross motor skills are employed when using their muscles to lift and carry blocks.



Cognitive Development- Block play encourages children to use problem-solving skills and early math skills through experiences of making comparisons, estimating, and can foster an understanding of special relationships.

Try it at Home:

Excerpt from [Math at Your Fingertips: Songs and Fingerplays for Preschoolers](#)
by Jessica Petertil & Mary Hynes-Berry

Imagine you are sitting looking out the window with your child or taking a walk; they point out a bird or a squirrel running across a tree branch, or ducks in the pond. This is the perfect time to introduce one of many fingerplays for preschoolers in the form of a song like *5 Little Ducks* or *5 Little Squirrels*. If you had peas for lunch, follow up with *5 Peas in a Pod*. The important thing is that you and your child are finding math in a shared interest.

Beehive

This is a beehive (*hand cupped*)
Where are the bees?
Hidden away where nobody sees...
Now they come creeping out of the hive
One, two, three, four, five (*extend fingers one by one*)
Five bees!
Bzzzzzzzz!

Five Little Birdies

Five little birdies went out one day
Over the hills and far away
The mother bird called "Tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet"
But only four little birdies came to see
(*continue decreasing number of birdies*)

<https://earlymath.erikson.edu/math-at-your-fingertips-songs-and-fingerplays-for-preschoolers/>