Ideas and Inspiration for the Shades of Wood Stacking Buildings

Shades of Wood Stacking Buildings (EL48615)

These ideas offer starting points for exploring the Shades of Wood Stacking Buildings through play.

The removable roofs allow children to change the appearance of their buildings, stack different sections and create combinations of their own.

Offer the buildings alongside blocks, small world figures, vehicles and other familiar resources, giving children time to explore, seeing where their ideas take them.

Join their play sensitively, commenting on what you notice and offering support, challenge or extend play when it is needed.





Communication and Language

Building Conversation

Building alongside others gives children opportunities to share ideas, describe their creations and problem solve with friends. If invited into the play, respond to what the children communicate and leave time for them to continue.

An occasional comment such as, 'That roof keeps sliding,' can open a conversation and lead to a discussion without needing a question.

Example vocabulary to introduce

Roof, doorway, curved, pointed, tall, beside, next to, on top, underneath, opposite.

Taking it further

Keep small world figures, other building blocks and materials nearby so children can introduce characters, extra setting pieces, conversations and stories into their play if they choose.

Creating a Story

With people, animals or vehicles available alongside the buildings, children may add to their setting by creating some of the following:

- Build streets and add names e.g. Hazel's Hairdressers, Patil's Post Office or Brian's Bakery.
- Turn their structures into homes for family and friends.
- Create familiar places and local landmarks. These could include things that they see in the local area like shops or places of worship.

Listen for the stories emerging as they move characters around and give buildings a purpose. If they offer you a role, follow their storylines and give them freedom to decide what happens next.

Example vocabulary to introduce

Visit, arrive, home, inside, neighbour, journey, landmarks, local area.

Taking it further

Make familiar story props available for children who want to bring favourite characters into their play.

Use recordable devices and other media e.g. Talking Buttons/clipboards, paper and mark making materials so that children can have a go at recording their ideas and stories.

Physical Development

Exploring the Pieces

Leave the roofs and building sections accessible so children can select, lift, turn and combine them independently.

As they explore and position pieces, they can adjust their grip and coordinate their movements. Give them time to work out how pieces sit together and what works best (either by shape, size or creatively) before stepping in or offering help.

Example vocabulary to introduce

Lift, turn, hold, place, lower, twist, steady, position, balance.

Taking it further

Provide a spacious building surface at a comfortable height for the child (this could be on a low table or on the floor), with room to reach and move around their constructions and creations.

Provide other building materials of different shapes and sizes such as wooden blocks, Lego etc so that children can explore how things connect and combine.

Finding the Balance

Children may stack building sections, balance roofs or repeatedly build and take things apart. These explorations give them opportunities to control their movements and feel when a piece needs repositioning.

Allow time for repetition, rebuilding and experimentation.

Example vocabulary to introduce

Balance, wobble, stack, gently, topple, slide, position.

Taking it further

Place different materials nearby so that children can find ways of supporting and adding to their structure.

Provide pictures of different real-life buildings for the children to look at. This may lead to discussions about how the different building were made, the materials used and the different shapes and how they fit together.

Noticing Size and Counting Opportunities

As children stack their buildings or arrange the buildings side by side, differences in height become visible.

Follow their interests in these comparisons before pointing out any others. Add language such as ‘taller’, or ‘wider’ where it fits.

Children may move, add or remove pieces to explore these differences for themselves.

Can the children create buildings using a different number of pieces? Who can build the tallest/shortest structure? What would that building become? Can the children count how many windows are in each of the buildings they create?

Example vocabulary to introduce

Tall, taller, short, shorter, wide, wider, narrow, same, different.

Taking it further

Keep familiar measuring resources (standard and non-standardised) nearby for children who want to check or record the size of their constructions.

Challenge the children to scale up their creations by recreating the buildings using different materials such as large-scale construction, junk or cardboard boxes.

Exploring Shape and Position

Rotating a roof or trying a different building section allows children to explore shape and space through practical experience.

Through trial and error, they may notice that some surfaces stack or fit more easily while others will overhang.

Give them space to test combinations and return to ideas that interest them.

Example language to introduce

Flat, curved, round, edge, above, below, big, small, overhand, suitable, size, shape.

Taking it further

Can the different pieces be put into a box or feely bag for the children to feel and describe. Can they identify which piece it is and explain their reasons.

Take the children on a shape hunt. Can they find similar shapes to the ones found on the buildings. Which type of buildings have different shaped roofs? Can they find other objects that are curved, flat, square, pointed etc?

Understanding the World

Familiar Places

Playing with the buildings may lead to discussions about familiar structures that mean something to them such as their home, shops or places they have visited.

Photographs of the local area or ones brought in by the children can be placed nearby for the children to look at, explore or use for inspiration in their play.

Respond to the connections they make, allowing their constructions to reflect their own experiences.

Example vocabulary to introduce

Street, shop, library, place of worship, neighbourhood, community, buildings, structures, belonging.

Taking it further

Encourage children to bring in photographs of buildings that mean something to them or that they find interesting. This might be buildings they have seen on holiday or on their walk to nursery or school.

Talk about how the building may be used and what might be inside them. Who might live in them or visit them? How do different places make us feel?









For more play experiences, try combining the Shades of Wood Stacking Buildings with the Shades of Wood Stacking People.