

Cognitive Development – The Blocks Area

To know the world we must construct it. - Pavese, Italian novelist and poet



What are children learning in The Block Area?

One of the characteristics that make us human is the ability to imagine something in one's own mind and then create it to make it real. The development of this symbolic representation is a major milestone in young children's thinking. Building, balancing, and ordering through play prepares children for more abstract mathematical thinking later in life.

Consider these links between learning and cognitive development:

- When children sort blocks by shape or place blocks back into their puzzle spaces, they practice making comparisons.
- Working together with other children or adults to create, plan, and construct a building lets children practice following and giving directions and helps them to understand the translation of ideas into words and actions.
- Balancing blocks in a tower – and then knocking them down – gives children practice with cause and effect.
- Understanding how things fit together and can be ordered in space helps prepare children for the more abstract concept of mathematical reasoning.

What can I do to support my child's cognitive development?

- When playing, use words such as, left, right, top, bottom, above, and below, to help your child develop spatial vocabulary.
- Encourage your child to use the blocks in many different ways. Children can build up to make towers and across in horizontal lines. The blocks can be used as puzzle pieces or props in imaginary play.
- Use the language of geometry to describe the shapes both in two-dimensional and three-dimensional terms. For example, refer to both squares and cubes.

More resources:

Simple math activities you can do with your child:
www.familyeducation.com

Articles on brain development, cognitive milestones, and more: www.pbs.org/parents/

Math Arts: Exploring Math through Art for 3 to 6 Year Olds, by Mary F. Kohl and Cindy Gainer, Gryphon House, 1996



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