

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Eco-builders - crafting with boxes

Engaging in modelling with recycled materials allows children to create imaginative structures while making choices, negotiating, and solving problems.

This activity provides the perfect opportunity for practitioners to tune into the children's ideas, support their development and extend their thinking.

Learning aims

- Foster children's ability to develop and express their own ideas
- Provide opportunities to explore, experiment and learn from their experiences, developing their problem-solving skills
- Encourage the use of language for thinking and problem-solving
- Promote effective communication by discussing ideas, plans, and creations with peers and adults.



Resources

- Various sizes of empty boxes (shoe boxes, cereal boxes, etc.)
- Other recyclable materials (bottle tops, egg cartons, etc.)
- Scissors
- Glue, clear tape, masking tape
- Paint, pens, coloured paper for decoration.

Activity outline

- Introduce the activity and explain that they can make whatever they want from the available materials
- Encourage children to come up with their own ideas and choose their resources, using phrases like, "That's an interesting idea, tell me more." Show genuine interest in the children's ideas by smiling and nodding, with comments like, "That's a great idea! How are you going to make that?"

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- Respect the children's decisions, choices, and ideas, allowing them to experiment and try their ideas out enabling them to learn from their experiences
- Model problem-solving skills when things don't go as planned, using phrases like, "I wonder why...?" or "Let's think about this together."
- Encourage and extend thinking with encouragement with comments like, "You've really thought hard about where to put this door, have you thought about where to put the windows?"
- Foster conversations about their designs and the materials they are using with questions like, "What shape are you going to use next and why?"
- Show genuine interest in their creations by commenting and using specific praise
- Display their work for everyone to admire with labels to summarise their ideas and enable you to reflect on the process and share the successes and difficulties.

Extension ideas:

- See this week's top tips for developing [sustained shared thinking](#) across your setting.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- Online course – [Child development: Birth-to-Five-Years](#)
- Online course – [Quality Teaching in the Early Years](#)