



Sciencenter At-Home: Block Neighborhood

Design and construct a neighborhood!

In this activity, learners will plan and build a map of a neighborhood.

Materials:

- Cardboard
- Markers
- Black construction paper
- White chalk
- Butcher paper
- Glue sticks (optional)
- Butchers paper (optional)
- Any other materials you'd like to build with.
 - Blocks, street signs, toy people and animals, toy cars, trains and tracks etc.



Try this:

Cut out the cardboard into house and building shapes and decorate

Cut the construction paper into strips and mark with chalk.

Start mapping out a neighborhood!

- Place your streets (if you're working on butchers paper, glue them down)
- Put up homes, stores, and other buildings.
- Place road signs, build with the blocks, and add in figures.



Encourage your child to think about what they see in their own neighborhood. Are there libraries, firehouses, grocery stores? What do they want to see in the neighborhood they're building?

If your child needs some guidance, ask them to tell a story about a person's day in the neighborhood.



Change it up!

Depending on the age and need of your child, this activity may look different. This is an open-ended and exploratory activity. There is no wrong way to do it!

Here are some activity extensions and adaptations:

- This activity is flexible depending on the materials that you have.
 - Skip the construction paper and use painters tape to mark your streets.
 - Enhance your train table with houses, shops and pedestrians.
 - Use toys from a specific movie or show and recreate their neighborhood.
- Make a maze that you can take the toys through!
- Do this activity two dimensionally, using different shapes (like triangles, rectangles, and circles) to compose your neighborhood.

Science Process Skills

This activity focuses on building the skills to participate in science over the science content itself. This activity focuses the learners on using skills like measuring and spatial reasoning as they map a neighborhood.

Spatial reasoning is an understanding of how different shapes fit together and how objects move through a space. Spatial abilities help to lay the foundation for math and visual skills like geometry and directionality. Engaging your child in activities like block stacking and map drawing will help them build spatial reasoning skills. When guiding your child through this activity, use words like; *on*, *in*, *next to*, *between*, *around*, *over*, and *through* to describe the neighborhood they built.

Measuring is another early math skill that helps us make quantitative observations. Using non-standard measuring units like hand lengths or blocks will help develop a greater understanding of the space and materials we're working with. When guiding your child through this activity, ask them how long the streets they've made are. Or how far away one building is from another.

This activity exists in many versions. This adaptation was inspired by *Measuring: How big is...?* from the Collaborative for Early Science Learning copyright 2021, Sciencenter, Ithaca NY.

Retrieved from: <http://www.sciencenter.org/perch/resources/measuring-3.pdf>