



Building Block Towers

Standard Connection:
ELA.SL.PK4.1A • ELA.L.PK4.6
M.MD.PK4.1 • M.G.PK4.5
PD.FM.PK4.4 • PD.SHS.PK4.5
SS.FC.PK4.1 • S.PS.PK4.3a

Enduring Understanding(s):

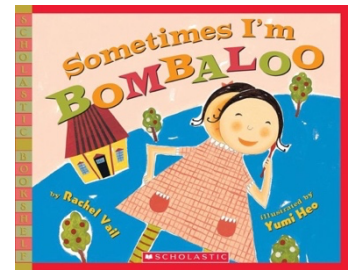
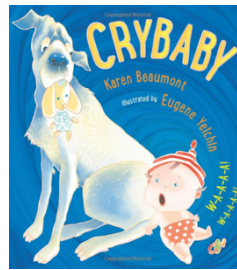
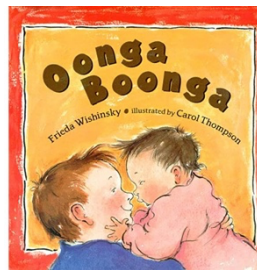
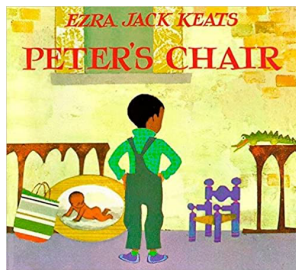
- A family is a group of people who care for and support each other.

Essential Question(s):

- What does it mean to be a member of a family?

Materials	Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peter's Chair</i> • <i>Oonga Boonga/Crybaby</i> • <i>Sometimes I'm Bombaloo</i> • various blocks (unit, Kapla, foam) • cardboard boxes (small to medium sized) • plastic milk crates • flat surfaces for children to build on • images of towers and tall buildings (see Resources) • image from <i>Peter's Chair</i> of the tower he built • clipboard • paper • writing utensils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tower: a tall, narrow building or structure • structure: something built that stands up by itself • building: a structure with a roof and walls • construct: make something • base: the bottom of something • foundation: a structure that supports a building from underneath • stack: put one thing on top of another • positional words: <i>next to, on top under, below, beneath</i> • plan: to make ahead of time • stable: not easy to move • sturdy: strong • topple: fall over

Books



Intro to Centers

Preparation: Set up materials

"In *Peter's Chair*, Peter **constructed** – he built - a tower of blocks. He worked carefully to keep it from **toppling** – falling over. What do you notice?"

Show illustration.
Children respond.

"Today in Blocks, you can use different kinds of blocks to **construct** towers like Peter did."

<p>“Sometimes when people build structures, – towers or buildings - they create a plan first. One way to make a plan is to draw a picture of what you want to build.”</p>	<p>Model drawing a plan, using positional and shape words (“I want to put a triangle block on top of a square block, and I want to put a short rectangular block under a long rectangle block.”)</p>
<p>“Now I have a plan for a tower. I can look at it when I build my tower.”</p>	
<p>“I want my tower to be stable – not fall over easily. I need a strong base, or foundation – the bottom of the tower.”</p>	<p>Construct a small block tower and point to the base.</p>
<p>“Stack blocks – put them on top of each other and on the base to build a tower, just like Peter in <i>Peter’s Chair</i>.”</p>	<p>Model. Show illustration.</p>
<p>“Experiment with making your tower sturdy – not easily knocked down. What happened to Peter’s tower when Willie ran into it?”</p>	<p>Children respond.</p>

During Centers:

- Encourage children to refer to images of towers and buildings for inspiration.
- Encourage children to make and follow a plan.
- Encourage children to observe how their friends are building and point out that there are many ways to build towers. Encourage children to collaborate.
- Encourage children to draw and label pictures of the towers.
- Support children in navigating building space appropriately to minimize knocking over each other’s structures.

Guiding Questions During Centers

- What shapes do you notice in Peter’s/your/your friend’s tower?
- How can you keep your tower stable as you build it higher?
- How is building a tower with colored foam blocks different from building a tower with wooden unit blocks? Why?
- How does having a plan help you construct your tower?
- If someone wanted to construct a tower like yours, how would you tell them to build it?

Thinking and Feedback

- Invite children to share their processes.
- Encourage children to describe any challenges they might have encountered.

Documentation

- Display photographs and children’s plans of their block towers for reference and inspiration.
- Use documentation and observation to assess children’s understanding of geometry and positional words.

Provocation

Encourage children to look for towers in their school and home neighborhoods. Encourage children to look for towers in fiction and non-fiction books.

Challenge children to stack, balance, and make sturdy other structures made from other materials (plastic cups, natural and recycled materials, etc.).