

Marshmallow Buildings

Let's build and create! Children will use simple materials to design and build structures.

STEM Focus: Engineering

Experiences Your Children Will Have

- Building and creating structures
- Exploring how things connect and stay standing

Vocabulary

- Build: To make something
- Connect: To join things together
- Stable: Strong and able to stand without falling
- Shape: The way something is formed, such as round or square.

Materials

- Mini marshmallows or play dough
- Toothpicks, straws, and/or sticks
- A small basket or container

Beginning

- Tell your child, *Today we are going to build with marshmallows and sticks.*
- Demonstrate how to connect materials to make simple shapes.
- Say, *I wonder what you can build?*
- Invite your child to begin building.

Middle

- Encourage your child to explore the materials, build, and try different ideas.
- Use the materials alongside your child and imitate how they use them.
- Talk about what they are doing. You might say, *You connected those pieces! or, Your building is standing.*
- Use the vocabulary words intentionally while interacting with your child.
- Use the specific strategies below, depending on your child's age:
 - Infants and toddlers may begin to explore the materials by mouthing, stacking, and touching the materials. You can support your child by describing actions: *You are stacking; You are connecting them.*

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- Preschoolers may build simple shapes and structures. You can support your child by asking questions: *How are you going to put your materials together to make your structure?; What materials are you going to need?*
- School-age children may design more complex buildings and solve problems. You can support your child by encouraging planning and thinking: *What is your plan?; What do you think you need to do so the structure does not lean over?*

End

- As you notice your child begin to lose interest, give them a warning that you are going to put the materials away. You might say, *In a few moments we are going to clean up. You can try out one more idea with your buildings.*
- Encourage your child to help you clean up the materials and put them away together.

Additional Learning

- Try building with different materials (blocks, cups, recycled items).
- Visit your local library to find books about buildings or structures.