

# STEM

*starts now*

## Building a Home

**Recommended Age:** 31–36 Months

**STEM concepts:** Engineering (building, problem solving), Math (counting, shapes)

**Materials:** Various building materials (blocks, plastic cups, bowls, toys, cardboard boxes, etc.), a stuffed animal

**What to do:** Tell your child that today, the two of you are going to be engineers. Your challenge is to design and build a house for his stuffed animal. Lay out the various building materials in front of him so he sees what he has to work with. One of the best ways for children to learn about engineering is through play. Give him some space as he builds a house for his stuffed animal! His creativity will be able to shine through as he builds. Occasionally, ask him how many blocks he's using or what shapes the different blocks are.

**Language and Communication:** When you first show your child the materials, ask her what kind of house she thinks her stuffed animal would like. This will help her come up with an idea before she builds. If at any point any part of the house falls over, encourage her to try again. Suggest a way to build it differently that may help it stand up longer. A big part of engineering is problem solving.

**Expand the Activity:** To expand this activity, have your child talk about how he built the house. What did he do first? What did he do next? Speaking about his building process will set the stage for engineering projects that he may do at school when he's older. If you have a lot of cardboard boxes or larger blocks, have him build a house for himself!

