

Setting the Table: Cardboard



Cardboard

is a lightweight building material, ideal for exploration of construction and invention, strengthening fine motor coordination and dexterity.

Building with cardboard promotes persistence and collaboration while growing a vocabulary of engineering - attach, twist, fasten, connect, screw in, construct, build, manufacture, fabricate.

Cardboard construction invites:

- Play and story creation
- Visual, tactile, auditory, and other sensory modality exploration
- Discovery of new theories and understandings of how the physical world works
- Experience with qualities and attributes of natural and fabricated materials



Materials List:

- Masking or Painters tape
- Scissors
- Brads, Makedo cardboard fasteners
- Cutting tools - Cardboard "saws" are available for purchase. Saws from pumpkin carving kits will work too.
- Tempera sticks, crayons, markers
- Cardboard - in large pieces and smaller shapes, tubes, formed packing materials, boxes.

Suggested Agreements

that support children's use of cardboard

- Find new ideas while you play!
- Share your cardboard strategies.
- Keep cardboard tools in Makerspace, talk to a teacher if you have other ideas.
- Clean up by putting materials back in their home.
- If tools or other materials are damaged, show a teacher.
- Reset materials for others to enjoy next!



Guiding Questions for Teachers

Finding Strategies:

- What strategies have you discovered?
- What strategies help with cutting, bending, tearing, making holes, attaching tape, screwing pieces together?

Invention:

- What is your building idea? What's your plan?
- What will you need?
- How might drawing a plan or making a list of materials you need help you get started?

Persistence:

- Building with cardboard takes practice. Let's practice our Persist Powers!
- How might teamwork/ collaboration help with cardboard?
- Who has a gift or talent for cardboard construction?

Picture Books:

Books About Building:

- *Boxitects*, by Kim Smith
- *Iggy Peck, Architect*, by Andrea Beaty
- *Not A Box*, by Antoinette Portis
- *What Can You Do With A Box*, by Jane Yolen and Chris Sheban



Books About Ideas and Persistence

- *What Do You Do With An Idea*, Kobi Yamada
- *Triangle*, Mac Barnett
- *Beautiful Oops!* Barney Salzberg
- *The Most Magnificent Thing*, Ashley Spires



Storage and Access

Cardboard Tips and Hacks

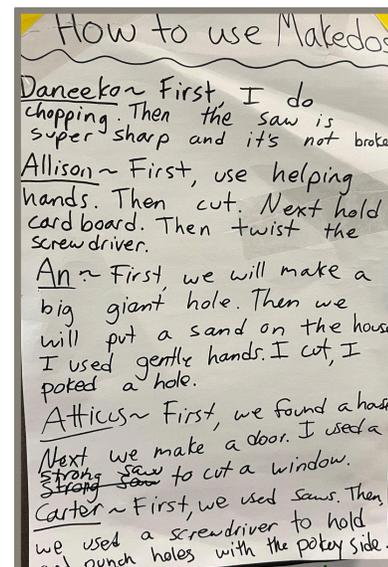
Offer a mix of ready-made shapes and large pieces for child-led designing.

Adults can use heavy-duty paper cutters in school workrooms to trim cardboard—carefully!

Give children plenty of time to explore, practice, and learn from mistakes before moving into intentional building.

MakeDo tools are great, but not necessary—pencils or screwdrivers can make holes too.

Talk with children about the building strategies they discover, and refer back to those strategies when they feel stuck.



Children's Strategy Ideas