

Make a Cardboard Box Dollhouse

You could spend a fortune on an upscale wooden dollhouse or hours assembling a store-bought kit – and yes, the results would be a bit more realistic. For most kids, though, the fun is in the process, and making a dollhouse out of cardboard boxes is as creative as it gets! Kindergarteners will love decorating their dollhouse with paint and other arts and crafts supplies, and they will have a dollhouse to play with again and again when the building fun is over!

What You Need:

- Assorted cardboard shipping boxes, similar sizes
- Exacto knife or scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Masking tape
- Small, shallow box top (such as the lid from a large jewelry box)
- Assorted paints and brushes
- Tissue paper in assorted colors
- Twigs
- Cotton balls or loose cotton
- Optional: contact paper in pretty designs for wallpaper or marbled or wood design for floors
- Optional: linoleum scraps, carpet remnants for floors



What You Do:

1. Either an adult with an exacto knife or a child with a good scissors can cut the top flaps off all the boxes. Leave the bottoms intact and taped shut. (Do not discard the extra flaps; you'll need them to build a chimney, shutters, etc.)
2. Help your little architect to stack the boxes with at least two or three on the bottom level and at least two levels, or "stories," of boxes, making sure that the largest and sturdiest ones are on the bottom. Remember where everything goes, then take apart.
3. Place a heavy layer of glue on the connecting sides of the boxes on the bottom, then press together. Apply a heavy layer of glue to the tops of the bottom boxes and press the second layer of boxes on top, with more glue in between them. If adding a third layer, repeat. Staple the boxes together along every edge to hold in place while they dry overnight.
4. Trim a piece of one of the cardboard scraps so you can fold it into a chimney-shaped rectangle. Tape this to the "roof."
5. Now, on to the fun part! Take the box outside or into a well-ventilated area and let your child paint the sides of the boxes. (Spray paint is easiest, but for adult use only.) If you have pretty contact paper or self-adhesive shelf paper on hand, cut it to fit the walls, peel off the backing, and apply – instant wallpaper! Marbleized contact paper, linoleum scraps, and carpet remnants make great flooring when glued or stapled in place.
6. Make the fireplace: color the top, inside and sides of the jewelry box lid and glue the back to the wall of a room on the bottom floor. Glue crumpled red, yellow, blue and orange construction paper to the back of the box for fire, and put a few twig logs at the bottom. Staple a puff of cotton (shred a few cotton balls with your fingers if you don't have loose cotton) to the top of the chimney for smoke.
7. Use the exacto knife to cut doors between the rooms and windows on the back and side walls. You can cut small rectangles from the cardboard scraps for shutters, and glue them at the sides

of the windows on the outside of the building. Make rag curtains, staple them above each window, and tie back with ribbons. Home sweet home!

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