Make Your Own Building Blocks

There's no need to visit a toy store to buy expensive building blocks! Your child can make his own life size blocks out of soft materials, and then begin building away in a room without breakables. Throw 'em, stack 'em, or even fall on 'em! These enormous blocks are fantastic for building both brain and body strength. The assembly is even easy enough for young children!

What You Need:

- 4-10 large paper supermarket bags
- Strong tape—either duct tape or packaging tape
- Large stack of newspapers
- Flat pieces of corrugated cardboard

What You Do:

1. With your child, stuff a grocery bag loosely with crumpled paper. Try to maintain a block shape to facilitate easy stacking.
2. Fold the top edges of the bag over and seal the "block" tightly with tape. Retain the handles for easy carrying.
3. Brainstorm other potential building structures with your child, such as bridges, tunnels, moats, and roofs.
4. Help him build any desired extra structures out of the corrugated cardboard.
5. Play with the blocks!

The purpose of these blocks is to allow rough handling without hurting your child. Don't be dismayed if one or more of the blocks tear during active play—simply designate a "block repair site." Keep strips of duct tape ready so your child is able to fix the blocks himself. If any of the blocks get damp from outside play, just leave them in the sun to dry!

Take it a Step Further...

Decorations are optional. Consider differing the size of the blocks to create some variety.

You can incorporate a science lesson into this activity by explaining the relationship of density and weight to your child. Density is actually a ratio. It is the relationship between the weight of whatever "stuff" you use and its volume (the amount of space it occupies).

Putting crumpled newspaper inside the blocks creates a lot of air space, which keeps the blocks light. Ask your child what he thinks would happen if you had put other items inside the bags, such as books or water. Would he still be able to kick them or throw them around?

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