

4



Ngā poro rākau | Blocks

Blocks can promote opportunities to develop maths, science, art, language, physical and social skills. They provide plenty of opportunities for developing persistence, problem solving, and creating 3-dimensional structures.

Links to Te Whāriki

Block play supports learning across all strands of *Te Whāriki*. In particular, it invites tamariki to imagine, invent, and experiment while at the same time encouraging reasoning and problem solving abilities (**Exploration | Mana aotūroa**).

Block play is often a time when tamariki learn strategies and skills to play with others (**Contribution | Mana tangata**). It can involve talking through ideas and discussing mathematical and scientific concepts (**Communication | Mana reo**).



Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education



Te Poutāhū
Curriculum Centre



4 Ngā poro rākau | Blocks

Blocks can help tamariki to:

- › learn about gravity, stability, balance, weight, and trial and error
- › understand shape, size, space, depth, width, and height
- › develop hand-eye coordination
- › learn to plan and ask questions — gain confidence in their own abilities
- › learn to collaborate — show respect for the rights and perspectives of others.

Adults can support tamariki by:

- › encouraging them to explore at their own pace, using their own ideas
- › helping them sort out problems
- › being present, showing interest through close listening and talk
- › providing the vocabulary in tune with their actions, such as mathematical, scientific terms, additional adjectives (e.g., more, higher, strong, wobbly, above, as well as counting)
- › encouraging them to help tidy up and care for the equipment
- › making sure they are safe
- › providing images of iconic buildings and structures for inspiration, e.g. fale, temples, skyscrapers, marae.

You could take pictures of the block structures before tidying them away. This can validate the effort tamariki have put into their work.

Providing for blocks

It's good to have a bit of space to spread out when playing with blocks. Carpet provides comfort, however some tamariki find it easier to build on an uncarpeted area. Using low shelving or boxes to store the blocks allows tamariki to reach the blocks they want.

Ideas for equipment

- › home-made blocks made out of different sized boxes (stuffed with paper and taped down or covered with several layers of papier mâché for strength)
- › multiple wooden unit blocks in full, half, or quarter sets
- › sets of coloured blocks
- › items to use alongside blocks — such as toy cars, people, and animals
- › other equipment such as cones, cardboard, and fabric.