








Developmental Stages of Block Play

<p>Stage 1 Carrying</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocks are carried around • Not used for construction • They explore them using their senses (touch, sight, taste) • May also hit them together to explore sound • Dumping them in piles from containers
<p>Stage 2 Stacking</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Begins • Stack the blocks either vertically (towers) or horizontally (rows)
<p>Stage 3 Bridging</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay a base block, place an upright block at both ends of it, then attempt to bridge the structure with a block the same length as the base block
<p>Stage 4 Enclosures</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occur soon after a child begins to use blocks regularly • Need cognitive understanding of spatial orientation, or knowing which direction to turn the blocks. They will continue to place blocks end to end, which ends up creating roads. • Begin with 4 blocks and eventually move to circle/ovals and joined enclosures
<p>Stage 5 Patterns And Symmetry</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine motor skills allow this to happen faster • Become more imaginative • Use more blocks • More intentional in their selection of kinds of blocks • Incorporate patterns and balance • May or may not name it
<p>Stage 6 Early Representation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name structure • Name reflects the purpose of the building, with names relating to function of building • Dramatic play often begins • block building basics have been mastered and they begin to use their blocks as a tool for dramatic play
<p>Stage 7 Later Representation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent actual structures children know from real life or stories. • Naming structures becomes more common. • Buildings are created to symbolize familiar structures. • The design elements become more intricate and represent actual details. • They will create their own accessories to support their play.

Compiled by the Iowa Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa and adapted from: Harriet Johnson in *The Art of Blockbuilding* (1933/1996), the work of Doug Clements and Julie Sarama in *Learning and Teaching Early Math: The Learning Trajectories Approach* (2009) and *Early Childhood Mathematics Education Research: Learning Trajectories for Young Children* (2009), and Ingrid Chalufour and Karen Worth in *Building Structures with Young Children* (2004).