



Build-osophy at DuPage Children's Museum

Becoming a Builder

Building Understanding
Promoting Creativity
In the Moser Construction House



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DCM values all the stages of woodworking -- from piles of sawdust to "real" vehicles with wheels and moving parts. As children hammer, saw, and sweep through predictable developmental stages*, they construct their own understanding of how the built environment works. Remember, you went through these stages, too. Now your child is becoming a builder!

**Based on Skeen, Garner and Cartwright (1984)
National Association for the Education of Young Children*



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At first, we're not even interested in building!
Instead, children are curious about the wood, the benches, or the weight of the tools, just getting comfortable in the Construction House.



Broom and Pan



Hammers



Saw



Drill



C-Clamp



Level



Clamp



Screwdrivers



Square with Level



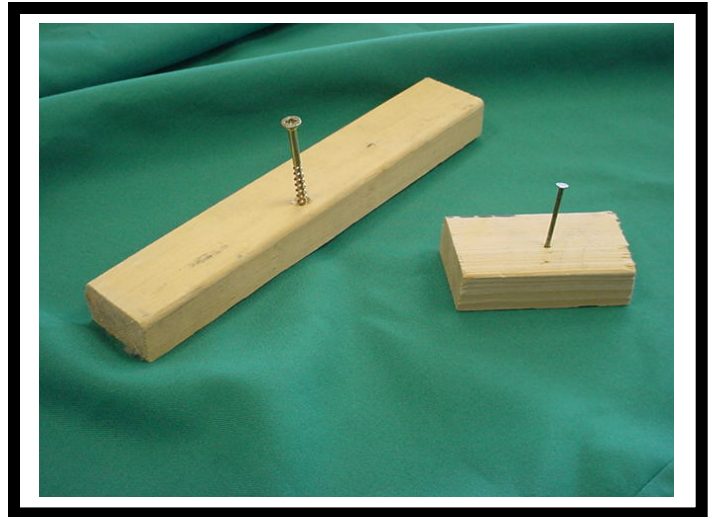
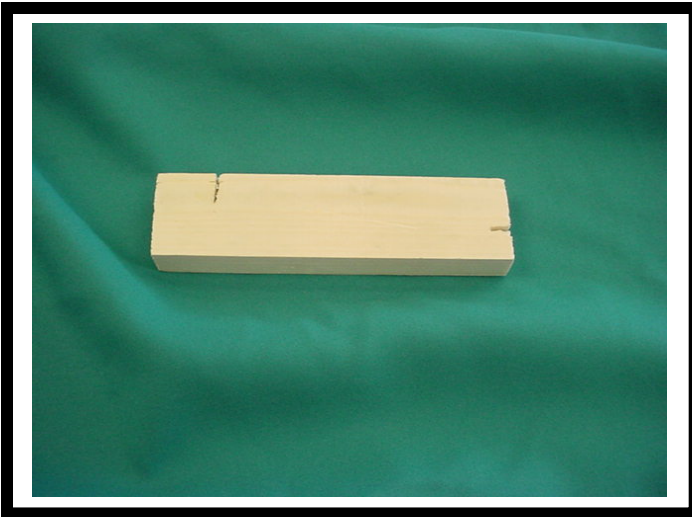
Sanding blocks



Rasp

In the next stage, we work on our skills

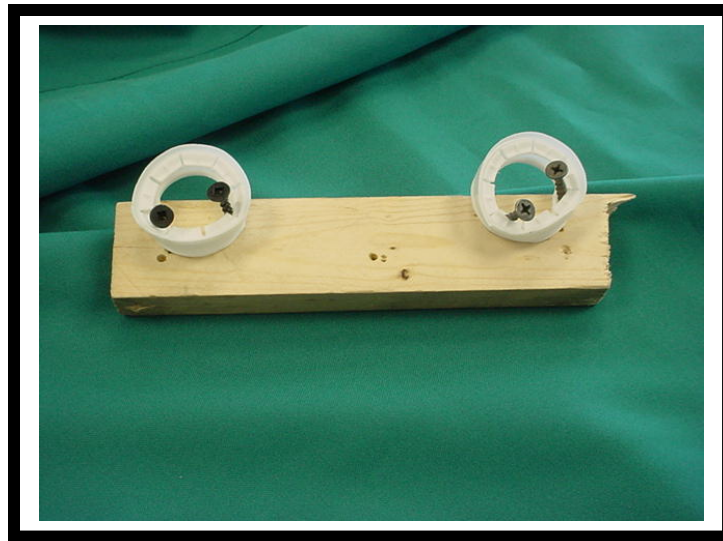
Children hammer for the sake of hammering, drill for the sake of drilling, and saw for the sake of sawing! They still may not "build" anything at all.



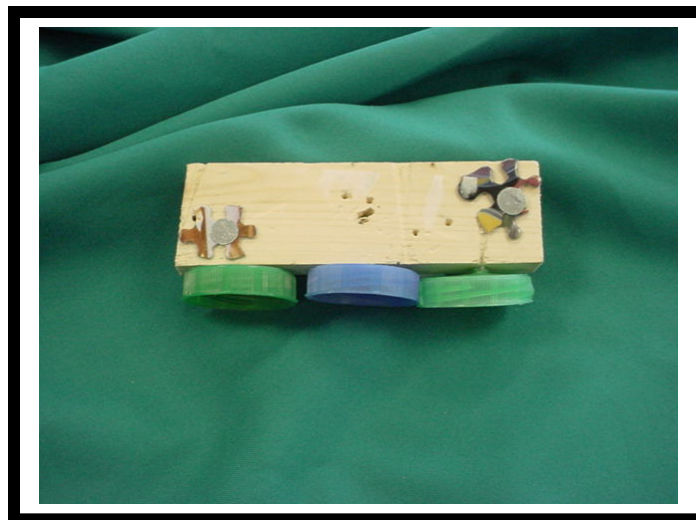
"Look, Dad, I made sawdust!"

Then simple construction begins

Children combine materials by using the skills they've practiced -- nailing together two pieces or attaching bottle caps to a block of wood. It's really only an afterthought to call it an "airplane" or "car."

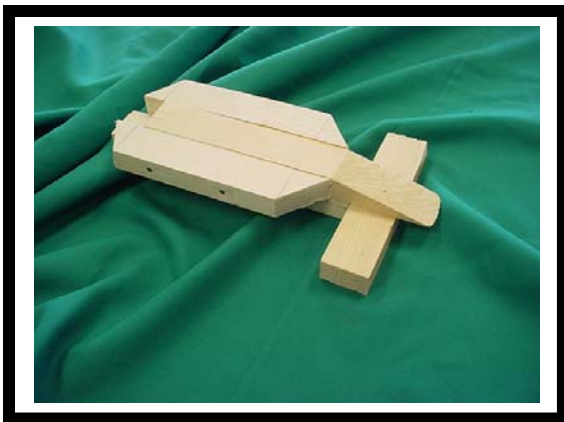
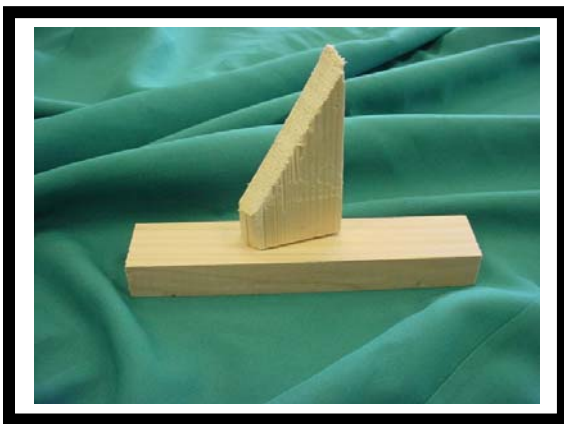


"I want to take my big car home, Mom."

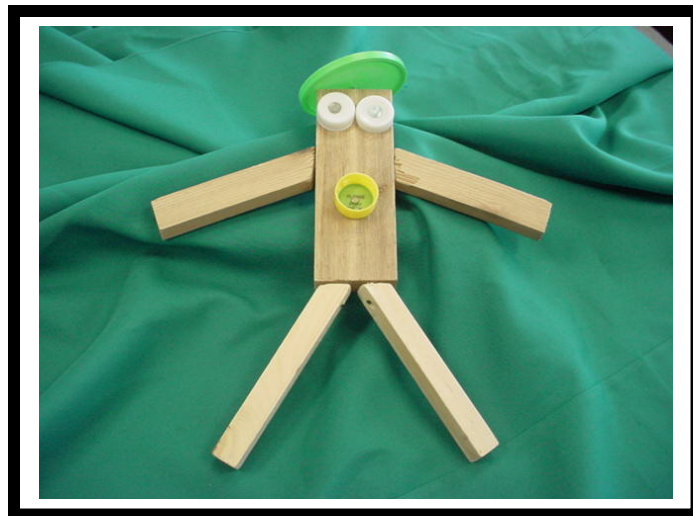
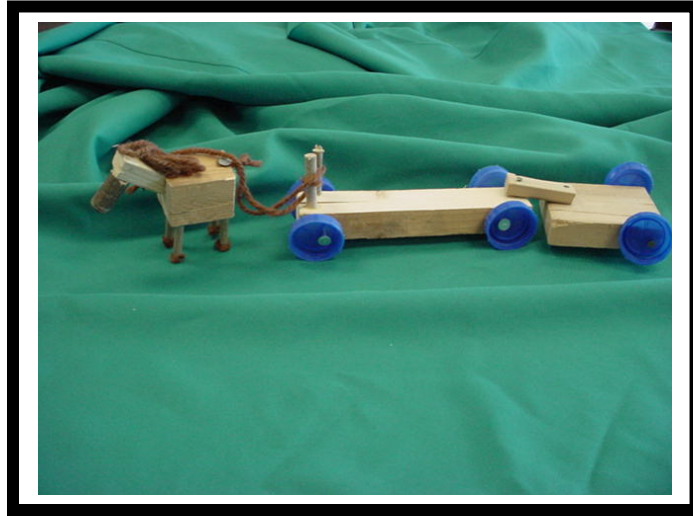


Finally, we're "builders"

We have a real idea in mind of what we want to make and purposely gather materials to form a specific shape. We often decide to change our first plan or even abandon it, but that's when special opportunities for creativity arise as we adjust and revise while we keep on building.



"It's a wagon; see the horse pulling the wagon."



Some of us may become great architects like Frank Lloyd Wright or Mies Van der Rohe. Some of us may design houses or build bridges. Some of us may make furniture. And some of us may just sit in furniture! But we all participate in our built environment. Creative building starts with our first curiosity ...



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How to Support Your Child in the Construction House

Wear safety goggles

Respect your child's capacities and limitations

Model appropriate use of the tools

Put the wood in the vice before sawing

If child asks, start a nail for your child

Offer Feedback

"It takes a lot of work to saw through a piece of wood."

"Look, you nailed two pieces of wood together."

Ask questions that stimulate problem solving

"Which nail do you think will go into the board?"

"How do you think we could add wheels to your car?"

Please don't be upset if the work completed is not what you expected. Remember, it's the process more than the product.

Show genuine appreciation for your child's effort.

"Tell me about what you've made."

Encourage and **support** your child in putting the tools away when he is finished.



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