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# Introduction

Maybe no-one can change a sow's ear into a silk purse. But with a little encouragement and imagination, young children can turn unwanted 'rubbish' into all sorts of useful playthings.

We want to take your kids a creative step further. In *Constructions* we show how a variety of homemade projects, used with one another, can produce an entire play community complete with stores, movies, transportation, food and so on, where kids can develop lots of language and social skills.

Inside this busy world, kids can drive cardboard cars to the general store to buy stationery for writing letters that can be mailed at the pretend post office. In the 'evening', they can stop at the restaurant for a quick meal before purchasing tickets at the box office for a show or concert. When kids get tired exploring this world, they can hop into a spaceship and explore another. These unique yet simple projects are meant to stimulate inventiveness and dramatic play.

## Easy Does It

Creating an entire community may seem like a big job. But don't worry. These projects will not require an adult to spend more time cutting and pasting than the children. In fact, most of the projects are entirely kid-constructed, with adults doing little more than encouraging youngsters and marvelling at their creativity. The directions invite experimentation, so that no two products will come out exactly the same.

## Materials

While the projects require some traditional resources, such as crayons and construction paper, emphasis is on unwanted household items, such as toilet paper tubes, shoe boxes, milk and egg cartons, detergent bottles and tin cans. Kids not only will have fun scavenging, but they also will learn the value of recycling.

Many of the step-by-step directions refer to 'decorations' – odds and ends that can be glued onto constructions for extra pizzazz. To encourage the kind of creativity that involves imagining new uses for old things, provide a Decoration Box or Bag in which kids can deposit items for their future constructions. These might include buttons, snippets of wool, string, beads, playing cards from incomplete decks, bottle caps, shells, ticket stubs, used postage stamps, picture postcards, you name it. The more exotic the contents, the more fun kids will have digging for treasure to dress up their constructions.

# POST OFFICE

Everyone likes to get letters! In this chapter, children learn about letter writing, receiving, processing and delivering through hands-on experience.



# Personal Letterbox

Has the postie come already?

## **MATERIALS:**

Shoe box  
Pipe cleaner  
Red construction paper  
Glue  
Textas  
Decorations  
Scissors

## **CONSTRUCTION:**

1. In the lid of the shoe box cut a slit long enough to insert letters.
2. Poke a hole in the middle of one of the short sides of the shoe box.
3. Stick a pipe cleaner a third of the way through the hole. Bend down the end of the pipe cleaner inside the box.
4. Bend the pipe cleaner outside the box like an elbow so that it can rotate parallel to the box.
5. Cut a small rectangular flag out of red paper. Write the box owner's name on the flag and glue it to the end of the pipe cleaner.
6. Decorate the mailbox with textas and glue-ons.
7. To take out the letters, push the flag down and remove the lid.

