



AGE RANGE: 8 and up • PREP TIME: 20 minutes • LEARNING TIME: Unlimited

Build your own Boxopolis at Home

What happens when you combine cardboard boxes, imagination, and a little teamwork? You get a one-of-a-kind cardboard city built right in your living room! Inspired by Discovery Place Science's Boxopolis, this easy at-home activity turns recycled materials into skyscrapers, castles, tunnels, rocket ships, and anything else kids can dream up. **The best part?** You don't need fancy supplies or expert building skills—just a grown-up helper, a pile of cardboard, and a willingness to get creative.

STEP 1

Gather Your Building Supplies

Before construction begins, round up your "city materials."

Cardboard Building Pieces

- Delivery boxes
- Cereal boxes
- Shoe boxes
- Toilet paper or paper towel tubes
- Egg cartons or other recyclables

Adhesives

- Masking tape (great for little hands)
- Packing tape or duct tape (for stronger support)
- Glue sticks or school glue

Cutting Tools

- Child-safe scissors for kids
- Utility knife or cardboard saw **for adults only**

Decorations

- Washable paint
- Markers or crayons
- Colored paper
- Stickers
- Anything sparkly, silly, or colorful

STEP 2

Create a Safe Building Zone

Set up a "construction site" on the floor or a large table. Keep adult-only cutting tools separate from the kid-friendly supplies.

Kids can:

- Tape pieces together
- Decorate buildings
- Hold cardboard while adults cut
- Help plan designs

Adults should:

- Handle thick cardboard cuts
- Use utility knives
- Build any heavy support pieces

PRO TIP: Put down a layer of newspaper or cardboard to help with cleanup after you are done.

STEP 3

Start with Simple Structures

Every city needs buildings! Start small and build confidence.

Easy beginner ideas:

- A cardboard house
- A robot
- A parking garage
- A tiny store or café
- A castle tower using paper towel tubes

Use masking tape to connect pieces quickly. Don't worry about perfection—crooked towers and wobbly windows are part of the fun.

STEP 4

Add Streets, Parks, and Silly Details

Once a few buildings are standing, it's time to grow your city.

Try adding:

- * Roads made from paper strips
- * Parks with drawn trees
- * Bridges between buildings
- * Secret tunnels
- * Signs and flags
- * Tiny cardboard animals or people

Encourage kids to invent stories about their city. Who lives there? Is it a futuristic city? A jungle town? A space colony?



Photo courtesy of
Discovery Place Science.



FIND MORE SCIENCE
ACTIVITIES >>



PARTNERS

