

Mini Tree House Build

What is the challenge? Design and build a miniature tree house in a potted plant.

What you need:

- Sturdy potted plant or a tree branch anchored into a pot with soil and a foam block.
- Balsa wood sheets
- Wooden chopsticks
- Dowel rods
- Toothpicks
- Craft sticks
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Scissors
- Exacto knife or box cutter
- Paper and pencil



What to do:

- Ask yourself: What does a tree house need?
- Using the paper and pencil, sketch out what you would like your tree house model to look like. Make sure to include supports, a way to climb into it and railings to stay safe.
- Once you have your design, it is time to build!
- Gather the materials you want to use.
- We suggest using the chopsticks and skewers as supports and to create the ladder.
- **Safety note:** Be careful while using the exacto knife to cut the balsa wood pieces and while using the hot glue gun. Adult supervision is recommended.
- Get creative! There are no wrong ways to build this tree house.



**EXPLORATION
PLACE**

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STEM connection:

- Supports are critical to a safe structure. They provide stability and strength. They are often built vertically.
- Bracing provides additional support and is used to reinforce structures. Braces can be placed in between major supports to distribute the load on each support.
- Think about a roof truss. It has many load-bearing points and bracing to support the roof of a house.

Take it further:

- Add on accessories to your tree house. Try adding a balcony or even a fireman's pole!

Notes for adults:

- Adult supervision is advised for use of sharp objects and the hot glue gun.
- Encourage your learners to use their imagination while building the tree house.

