

# How to Build a Child's Playhouse



## 1. Determine lay out

The first step is to decide at what angle the structure will be situated and which direction the front door will face.

## 2. Cut and lay out lumber

Begin by cutting and laying out the pressure treated lumber to use for the floor joist system. Draw lines every 16 inches along the outside joists, or rim, where the floor joists will be attached with a nail gun.

Make sure that the joists are flush with the rim before attaching them. Drive in corner stakes to mark the location of the floor joist assembly and then lift it out of the way and set it aside.



## 3. Ground preparation

The playhouse must be situated on a perfectly level surface. Use cement blocks and sand to adjust the height of all four corners of the joist system to create a level foundation.

Begin with the highest corner and cut away the sod if necessary, and then add a layer of sand.

Create a level bed for the concrete block. Sand is used because it is easier to move around than compacted soil. Run a string around the perimeter of the foundation and align the edges of the blocks with the string to determine if the blocks are positioned correctly. If the four corner blocks are level with each other, then everything that is built on top of them will be also be level.

Lay additional blocks around the perimeter for adequate support and set the floor joist system in place on the blocks.



#### **4. Posts for front porch**

Next, install the four posts for the covered front porch and railing. Clamp the first post to the rim joist, then use a post level to make sure it is plumb (perfectly vertical.)



Bore a hole all the way through the rim joist and the post then use a hammer to tap a galvanized steel bolt through the hole. Add a washer and nut and then tighten it with a socket wrench so that washer just begins to compress the wood.

Repeat the process on the adjacent side and then attach the remaining two posts the same way.



## 5. Flooring

The flooring is similar to outdoor decking. Before the floor decking is laid, see Ron's tip on [preventing deck squeaks](#). After attaching strips of roofing felt on top of the joists, you are ready to lay the first deck board, which needs to be notched to fit around the posts.

Set a combination square to the thickness of the post. Use the square as a guide to transfer this dimension to the board. Use a jigsaw to cut out the necessary notches.



Attach deck boards by driving rustproof galvanized screws into the joists. Install the remaining boards in assembly line fashion. Start each screw by tapping it into the surface with a hammer and then drive it in with a power driver.



## 6. Wall framing

Pre-cut each of the wall studs and mark each piece to create a wall kit. Use a pneumatic nail gun to nail all of the wall pieces together.

Drive the screws through the base plate of the first wall section and then repeat the process with the second section.



Attach the wall sections together with screws. Wall number three is framed with a window and the final wall panel has both the doorframe and a window.



## 7. Siding

To turn the framed walls into sheathed walls, measure, cut and attach T111 paneling, also called sheathing, to fit the wall studs. Cut out the window and door openings as necessary before attaching the siding.

Begin along the top edge of the wall. Drive nails through the siding and into the wall frame about every 16 inches. Before attaching the sides, make sure that the siding lines up to the wall stud from top to bottom. There is a lot of flexibility in the structure before the siding is attached. The siding helps to strengthen the house, but it has to be attached perfectly squarely.

Attach the siding to all of the wall studs, beginning with the outside edges. This will make the house very sturdy.

Do not attach sheathing to the back of the house until the first roof truss is installed. The siding will cover the back wall and up to the peak of the first truss. Attach overhanging 2 X 6's to the top of the sheathed walls to form the eaves.



## 8. Roof trusses

The roof trusses form the shape of the roof and give it its strength. The trusses are made out of two pieces of two-by-four, cut to the appropriate length and angle.

Temporarily tack two strips of wood to the floor to hold the truss pieces in the proper position. Then use screws to attach a triangular shaped piece of roof sheathing, called a gusset.



Align the ends of the trusses with the outside of the eaves.



Attach the trusses to the eaves by driving screws up from underneath, through the eaves and into the trusses.



Measure and cut 2 X 4s to fit between the roof trusses. This will connect all of the trusses together and add additional support for the roof sheathing.



### **9. Roof sheathing**

The roof sheathing, which is 5/8" OSB (oriented strand board) needs to overhang the trusses by about one inch on the front.

To eliminate any guesswork, draw lines on the roof sheathing to show the location of the trusses underneath.



Once the sheathing is firmly nailed to the trusses,



attach fascia boards to cover the ends of the roof trusses.

Install a drip cap along the two bottom edges of the roof. These will keep rainwater from seeping into the edge of the plywood sheathing. The first waterproof barrier is roofing felt. Start at the bottom edge and attach the felt with staples. Overlap the upper strip and attach it in the same way.



Install asphalt shingles on top of the roofing felt.



### **10. Window installation**

Bend back the nailing flange and put a bead of sealant on the inside of the flange. Rest the bottom edge of the window down on the sill and then tip the window upright and press it firmly against the wall. It is okay if a little of the caulk squishes out the sides. That means there is a good seal.

Attach the flange to the window frame studs with a 1 1/2" or 2" roofing nail.



After the flange is securely nailed, conceal it with strips of 1 X 4 wood trim.



### 11. Porch railing

A porch railing can be created out of standard railing parts that are modified slightly due to the small scale. Cut the balusters so that they are shorter and then cut the railing into shorter pieces as needed. Squeeze a dollop of construction adhesive into each opening in



the railing and then drop a baluster into each precut hole.

Use a pin nailer to attach each baluster in place. Drive each nail in at an angle called toenailing.

Take another length of exactly the same material and turn it over to support the other ends of the balusters. Drive screws through the bottom rail while the balusters are held in a vertical position.



To install the railing on the front porch, place a block on the deck as a spacer. Set the railing in position and then toenail it into place.



## **12. Finishing touches**

Window boxes, flower pots, a Dutch door, trim and moldings, even a mailbox and welcome mat are all fun additions to make the new playhouse just like home!

