



Building Stories

It's an architect's job to create a design for a structure that is safe, functional and looks pleasing.

But how does an architect know what elements he needs to include in his design? He asks lots of questions!

Ask your child to pretend that you are an architect and that he has hired you to design his dream home. Let him know that you are going to ask him questions about what he wants and needs in his new house and that there are no limits on size or expense. Some questions you might ask are:

- >> Where will the dream house be built? In the mountains, the city, near the ocean?
- >> What kinds of building materials do you like? Wood, brick, concrete?
- >> How many rooms do you want to have? What happens in these rooms?
- >> Does it have an upstairs? A basement? An elevator?
- >> What kind of furniture do you want? Are there special features like a swimming pool?

Write down his answers. Then hand the role of architect over to him. Provide him with pencil and paper to start drawing the floor plan for his dream house. Explain that a floor plan is like a map — you are looking at it with a bird's eye view. The floor plan shows the outside shape of the house and what's inside: walls, doors, windows, bathrooms and special features. Each room needs to be labeled. The answers to the earlier questions will help him with his design.

When the floor plan is finished, your child may want to build a model of his dream home or draw a picture of what the finished house looks like. You might also ask your child to tell you a story about how he would typically spend his day living in his dream house.

Variation: Although Architect Studio 3D was created with older children in mind and requires a fairly fast computer, you and your child could work together — with Frank Lloyd Wright as your guide — to design a house online: http://architectstudio3d.org/AS3d/design_studio.html

