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Semi-Tutorial: Making a Cardboard Kid-Size Play Kitchen



A couple of years ago, I fretted over buying Piano Man a kids' play kitchen. You know the kind, those awesome plastic Step2 kitchens with fake granite or Corian countertops with plastic gray stainless steel looking appliances. Part of me was ready to pull the trigger and buy such a large play piece for him, but I wasn't sure if or how much play time the kitchen would get.

Then I ran across a *Family Fun* article to make your very own cardboard version of a kid size play kitchen. Brilliant! (Unfortunately, I cannot find the article on *Family Fun's* website anymore.)

I enjoyed making this DIY project. You can make it with recyclable materials, and it would only cost cents on the dollar, a great way to help our environment and save money.

Materials/Supplies:

- Craft glue
- Scissors
- X-ACTO knife
- Marker/Pencil
- Ruler
- Cardboard boxes (resembling pieces of kitchen)
- Leftover wrapping paper

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Tape
3M Command hook (optional)
Velcro pieces
Hot glue gun
Glue sticks
Computer/Printer (for microwave panel design)
Ribbon
Painter's tape
Ziploc storage container
3 lotion or soap pumps
Construction or cardstock paper
Packaging tape
Craft pipe cleaners
Tops of a ketchup bottle facial wash

Instructions:

Note: Because I made this a couple of years ago before I started blogging, I don't have a step-by-step picture tutorial to show details in my kitchen design.

1. Pick out cardboard boxes that would fit the size of a play kitchen. Designate which cardboard box goes with your specific kitchen appliance.

2. For the kitchen sink:

a. Use a Ziploc storage container as a template and mark where to cut out a hole for the drop in sink.

b. I recommend you make cut out slightly smaller than the actual size of the container. You can always make the hole larger, not smaller.) Cut out the hole for sink carefully with an X-ACTO knife.

c. Using a ruler, mark horizontal lines for the lower cabinet under the sink. Also, mark a vertical line. Then use the X-ACTO knife to cut out the cabinet fronts.

3. For the electric/gas stovetop and oven:

a. Mark a square for the oven door with a ruler and marker/pencil.

b. Cut out on the left, top, and right sides. Be sure to keep the bottom part of the square intact to the body of the cardboard box.

c. Add a small piece of cardboard to the inside back of the oven door. (You'll need this to add a velcro enclosure to keep the oven door closed. More on this in Step 9.)

4. For the microwave:

a. Mark another square with a ruler and marker/pencil. Use the X-ACTO knife to cut out the top, right, and bottom sides of the square shape. Be sure to leave the left side intact. (If you prefer, you can make the microwave go the other way too.)

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b. Go to Google images and search for microwave button panels. Choose a photo to print. Save this print out for later.

5. For the above the sink pantry:

a. I used an old Ziploc bags box from Costco, and I cut out an entire side of the box.

6. For the top/bottom refrigerator:

a. I used three newborn sized baby diapers and used packaging tape to close the top of the boxes.

b. Cut the sides of the boxes, leaving one side intact (to act as the hinge on the refrigerator door). You will have three doors to your fridge at this point.

c. Tape together the bottom two front doors to make one large door piece, leaving the top door as the freezer door.

7. Then wrap each box with leftover wrapping paper.

a. Optional: You can add painter's tape (such as Frog Tape which is green) or colored duct tape around the edges of the doors. It visually helps designate borders of the cabinets and secures the wrapping paper from wear and tear.

b. Add two circles to represent the electric/gas stove using construction paper or cardstock paper.

c. Glue the printed microwave button panel on the microwave.

d. Puncture holes for the handles on the cabinets, oven, microwave, and refrigerator. Before making holes, make sure your child's hands fit between punctured spacing. Add desired ribbons as handle knobs. Tie them in knots on the back panels.

e. Puncture three holes at the front of the oven, above the oven door. You can designate the middle hole for the oven temperature knob and the two flanked holes for the stovetop knobs. Cut off tops of facial soap or ketchup bottles to use as stove knobs. Use an X-ACTO knife to carefully cut off any sharp or jagged edges. Tie one end of the pipe cleaner and push the pipe cleaner through the hole of the knob and hole in the front panel. Tie another knot in the back to secure the knobs.

8: Optional: You can use another box or two as a stand to hold the microwave and pantry above the stovetop/oven and sink. It also helps to create a background for your now functional kids' play kitchen.

9. Last step, add velcro pieces to the inside of the cabinet door, stovetop/oven, microwave, and refrigerator. This will help ensure your doors are closed and stay closed. (Note: I tried to use leftover magnets, but the magnets were not strong enough to keep two thick pieces of cardboard together. I found that velcro worked best.) Also, if you feel like adding a little hook on the side of the kitchen sink, add a 3M Command hook to hold a potholder.