

# LEGO® Based Therapy



An evidence lead six week block of resources for school staff to deliver to support children's language and social communication needs

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## **Background/Evidence**

Lego® therapy is a social skills group which aims to develop social interaction in a fun, friendly setting. Each child is given a role (e.g. supplier, engineer, builder) and the children build Lego® models in small groups, with adult help. A number of skills can be practised in these groups: turn-taking, collaboration, social problem solving, joint focus, communication.

Research has shown Lego® therapy is effective in developing a child's ability to initiate and sustain communication (Lego® Legoff, 2004).

## **Selecting suitable children**

Lego® therapy can be used with a variety of children including those with social communication difficulties and language difficulties.

Lego® therapy can be used with children from the age of 5, and is effective in secondary schools as well.

Three children can participate in each group. It is recommended that the same three children remain in the group for the six week programme.

## **Duration and Location**

Each session should last around 30-45 minutes, and should take place at least once a week. It is important to find a quiet room or space so that the children can focus easily. Children with language difficulties sometimes find it difficult to process spoken information and to think of how they are going to structure their responses, so try not to rush them during these sessions.

## **Resources needed**

Lego® building sets or bricks.

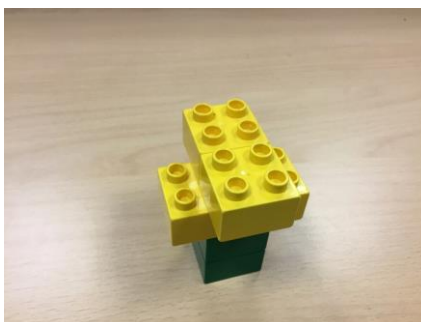
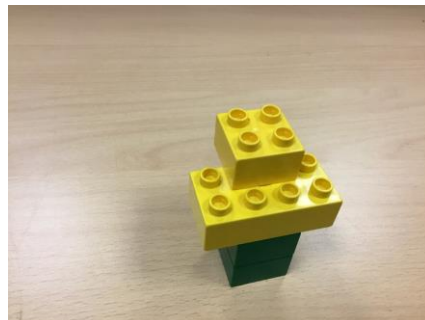
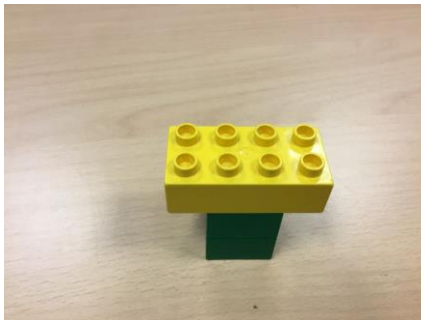
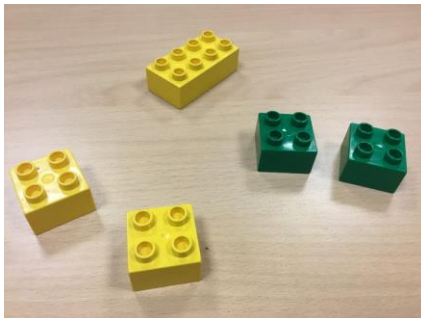
Building sets can be purchased from a number of retailers or supermarkets. Possible ideas of sets that you can purchase are:



Wilko Blox Robot 3 in 1  
Small ...  
£3.00



Alternatively you could make your own Lego® model and take pictures of each stage (if you take pictures on an iPad that is available for use, this can be used in each session rather than printing pictures off). For example:



**Examples/ Videos with more information about Lego® Therapy**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvY6uA1NCi4>

Larger bricks, eg Duplo, can be used if more appropriate for the child's motor skills.

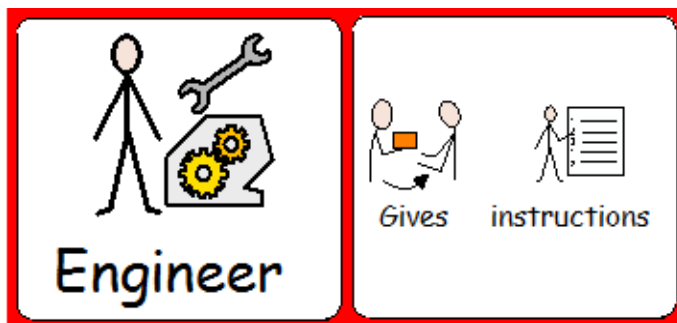
## General Instructions

### What happens in the sessions?

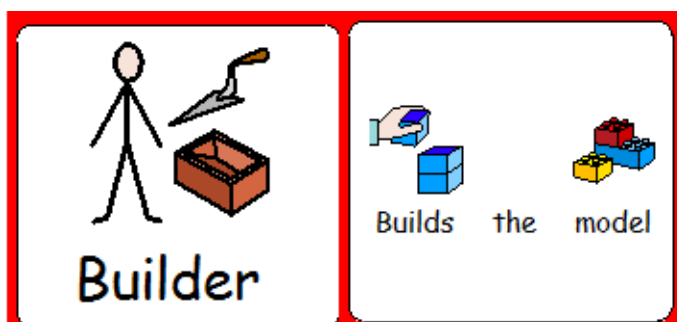
During each group, the children will work together to build a Lego® model, using picture instructions. You **do not** have to complete a model during each session – it may be that you start a model in one session, and carry it on in the next session.

### What do the children do?

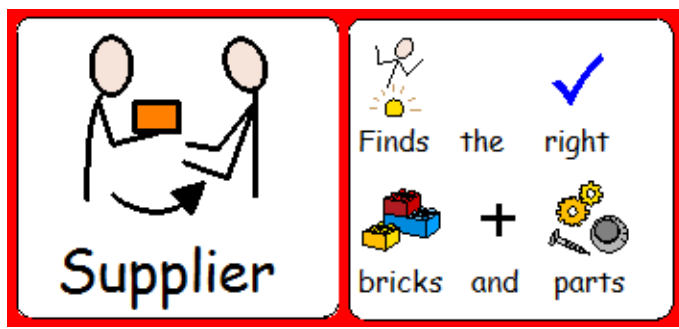
There are 3 roles that the children take on in Lego® Therapy:



The Engineer is the main job. They use the pictures to give instructions to the other members of the group (e.g. asking the supplier to find the bricks, instructing the builder). They also need to think of alternative descriptions if a peer gets the instruction wrong.



The builder needs to listen to the instructions from the Engineer to place the part in the right place. They may need to check back with the Engineer whether they have got it right.



The Supplier is the least demanding role. They have to listen to the Engineer then hand the Builder the correct bricks. This means they have to find the right colour, size, shape etc. brick

Do children keep the same role every week?

Not necessarily. You may have a child who specifically needs to practise giving instructions; therefore you may want them to be the Engineer most of the time. However it is good for the children to experience taking on different roles. It is also likely that children will want to change their role (particularly if they are the supplier!)

What is your role as an adult?

As an adult, you are there to **facilitate** the group, and make sure it keeps on track. Remember to:

1. Let children get it wrong- that is how they will learn!
2. Talk about what's going wrong but wait for them to suggest alternative strategies: use questions to help them problem-solve e.g. 'what could you do next?' 'what might you need to ask the Engineer?'
3. Ask the children to evaluate at the end.
4. Talk about body language and facial expressions immediately after they have listened or built something.
5. Talk about their feelings after the session.
6. Talk about what was easy or difficult and why.
7. Praise positive interactions, strategies and non-verbal communication.

# Session Plans

## Week One

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>What to do</b>
1. Group rules	Whiteboard or paper  Pens	Start by setting up some group rules. For older children, you may want to encourage them to generate their own rules. These could be written down on a big piece of paper, or on a whiteboard, then put somewhere they can be referred back to. It might help to draw a picture to represent the rule e.g. a pair of eyes if someone has suggested good looking. See resources for some suggested rules.
2. How are we feeling today?	Pictures of emotions	Go round the group and ask each child to pick a picture of how they are feeling. To extend this, you could ask them to explain why they are feeling that emotion.
3. Looking at Lego®	Different sizes/shapes/colours of Lego® bricks	Put out a selection of Lego® blocks. Discuss the different shapes, size, colour; then get the children to 'sort' the bricks into different groups (e.g. 'put all the square bricks together' 'but all the blue bricks together' 'put all the bricks with 4 dots together').

4. Prepositions	Lego® bricks	Talk about what different places you may need to put the bricks e.g. on top of, next to, in front of: you could give children instructions to practise this.
5. Questions	None	Talk about why you might need to ask each other questions (if you don't understand, to check you are doing the right thing). Encourage the children to think of questions that they might ask each other e.g. Can you say that again? Is this right? How many do I need? How many dots?
6. Time to play!	Lego® bricks	Allow some time at the end of the session for children to build a quick model themselves. Tell the children how long they have and set a timer.

## Week Two

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>What to do</b>
1. Group rules	Whiteboard or paper  Pens	Recap the group rules – can the children remember them?
2. How are we feeling today?	Pictures of emotions	Go round the group and ask each child to pick a picture of how they are feeling. To extend this, you could ask them to explain why they are feeling that emotion.
3. Lego® therapy roles	Pictures of the different roles	Introduce the different roles. Talk about what is involved for each role. Allocate the roles for the week (you could either choose, or do this randomly, e.g. by holding down the role pictures face down and getting each child to pick one).
4. Get building together!	Pictures of how to build the model and corresponding bricks.	Explain that you are going to start building a model together: then get going!  Adult facilitates – encourage children to ask questions to each other e.g. Can you say that again? Is this right? How many do I need? How many dots? How many pieces?

## Week Three-Six

The format for each session will broadly follow the same outline for weeks three-six. Once a model has been completed, start a new one! You could increase the difficulty of the models as the sessions progress (if the children are coping well).

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>What to do</b>
1. Group rules	Whiteboard or paper  Pens	Recap the group rules – can the children remember them?
2. How are we feeling today?	Pictures of emotions	Go round the group and ask each child to pick a picture of how they are feeling. To extend this, you could ask them to explain why they are feeling that emotion.
3. Get building together!	Pictures of how to build the model and corresponding bricks	Carry on with model from last week, or start a new model.  Adult facilitates – encourage children to ask questions to each other e.g. Can you say that again? Is this right? How many do I need? How many dots? How many pieces?
4. Reflection	Pictures of social skills/ rules board pictures.	Reflect on Lego® building: Does it look like picture? Choose one thing you did well, and one thing to get better at.

## **Record keeping**

Please complete a Lego Progress Sheet (see Resources) for each student after every session. If you are continuing the programme after the six weeks please continue recording on a new sheet and then present this information to the SLT at your Link Meeting for next steps to be discussed.

## **What next?**

Lego® therapy does not necessarily have to stop at week six – you could carry it on if you feel the children are benefitting. It can be extended by having more complex models for the children to build, or even encouraging them to design and build their own models (this might be suitable if you have a group who have good language skills, but need to continue developing their social skills).

You could swap out/in some members of the group – changing members can mean a change in group dynamic!

If you feel a child in the group needs more support with language, you could consider whether the 'Vocabulary Group' or 'Shape Coding™ group' might be suitable for them (these are separate packs that can be requested).

## **Contact**

Any queries contact CYP Therapies on 01296 566045.

## Lego Group Targets

- You can choose 1-2 targets for each child depending on their need (e.g. whether it is language skills, social communication skills or both).
- This document gives an indication of possible areas to target in the group, this is not an exhaustive list, please adapt your own targets according to each child's needs.

### Language

	Always A	Sometimes S	Occasionally O	Never N
Gives clear description with 1/2/or 3 describing words				
Gives clear description using a colour				
Gives clear description using a size word				
Gives clear description using a colour, size and shape word				
Uses "where" words in instructions e.g. top/middle/bottom/on/next to/in-front/behind/up/down/vertical/horizontal/diagonal				
Changes/ repeats instructions if peer has not understood				
Asks for support if they have not understood the instruction (e.g. repetition, clarification)				

### Social Communication

	Always A	Sometimes S	Occasionally O	Never N
Uses eye contact with other group members				
Waits their turn				
Does not interrupt others turn in the group				
Maintains appropriate distance with peers				
Accepts specific role in a group				
Helps others (verbally)				
Helps others (physically) <i>without taking over</i>				
Gives the listener sufficient information				
Shows enjoyment				
Manages frustration				
Negotiates disagreements				
Shows creativity or imagination				
Gives a compliment to others in the group				
Tidies up when told				
Keeps attention on task for ....% of the time				

**LEGO THERAPY** Date of session: / /

Childs name:

LSA:

Tasks		Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
<b>Introduction</b>							
<b>How are we feeling today?</b>							
<b>Building</b>							
<b>Role taken in building (tick)</b>	Engineer						
	Supplier						
	Builder						
<b>Comments on the session.</b>							
This can include... ~ <i>Independent initiations</i> ~ <i>Number of prompts</i> ~ <i>Verbal language used</i>							
listening talking sitting looking thinking (about the group/task) hands		achieved	developing	achieved	developing	achieved	developing
<b>Reflection</b>							
Reflection Yours (main focus)		Did well	Need help with	Did well	Need help with	Did well	Need help with
Child's							

**LEGO THERAPY** Date of session: / /

Childs Name:

LSA:

Tasks		Week 4		Week 5		Week 6	
<b>Introduction</b>							
How are we feeling today?							
<b>Building</b>							
<b>Build Model Together</b>	Engineer						
	Supplier						
	Builder						
<b>Comments on the session.</b>							
This can include... ~ <i>Independent initiations</i> ~ <i>Number of prompts</i> ~ <i>Verbal language used</i>							
listening talking sitting looking thinking (about the group/task) hands	achieved	developing	achieved	developing	achieved	developing	
<b>Reflection</b>							
Reflection yours (main focus)	Did well	Need help with	Did well	Need help with	Did well	Need help with	
Child's							



## Lego Clubs Rules



Good



looking



Good



listening



Good



waiting



Good



sitting



Good



talking



Good



hands

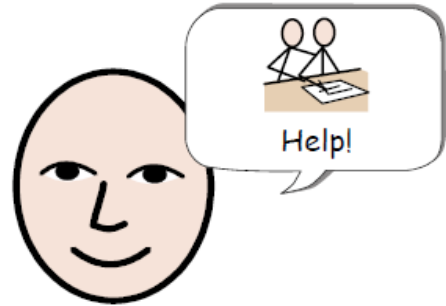




## Lego Clubs Rules

1. Build things together
2. If you break it, you have to fix it or ask for help
3. If someone else is using it, don't take it, ask first
4. Clean up and put things back where they came from
5. Good talking – use inside voice & kind words
6. Good listening – listen to what others are saying
7. Quiet hands and feet – keep your body parts to yourself
8. Good thinking – think before you answer or do an action
9. Good sitting – keep sitting in your seat
10. Good looking – if it's not your turn, keep looking to see what you have to do next





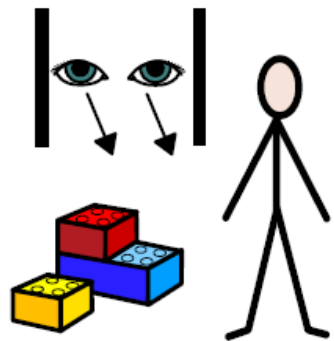
Ask for help



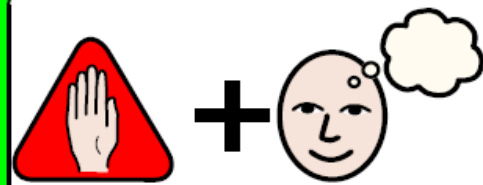
Stick to your own job.



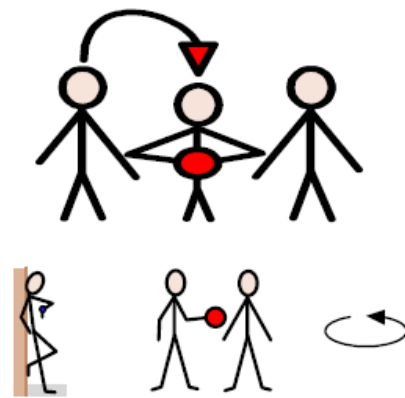
Ask politely



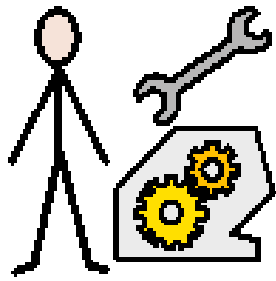
Watch to check someone understands your instruction.



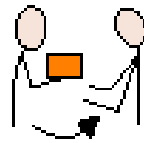
Stop and think.



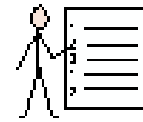
Wait your turn



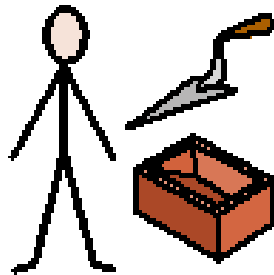
Engineer



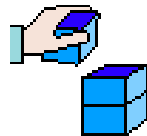
Gives



instructions



Builder

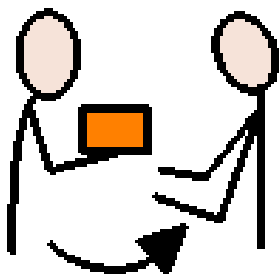


Builds

the



model



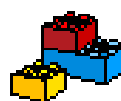
Supplier



Finds

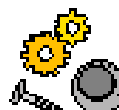
the

right



bricks

+

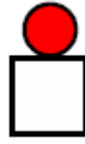


and

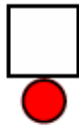
parts



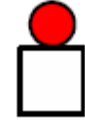
in



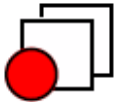
on



under



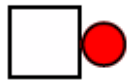
on top



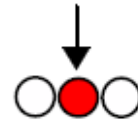
at the front



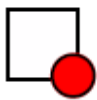
at the back



next to



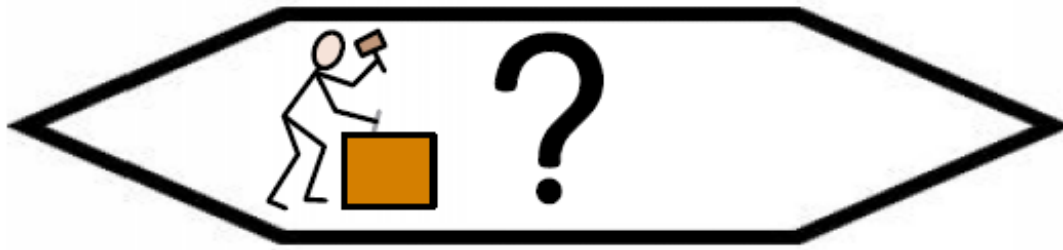
in the middle



in front



behind



move



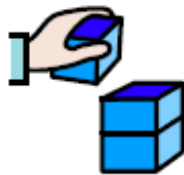
connect



turn



twist



add



put



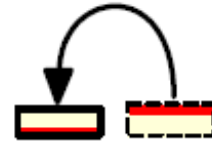
break



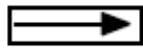
fix



change



turn over



horizontal



vertical



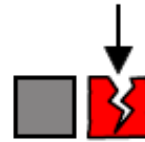
upside down



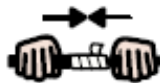
twisted



matching



broken



fixed



shiny



transparent



brilliant