



HIGHSHORE SCHOOL

Lego Therapy Policy

Aims and Purposes

- Lego therapy aims to develop social competence through the development of social skills.
- Collaborative Lego play provides opportunities for pupils to practice turn-taking, listening, sharing ideas, communication, compromise, problem solving and shared attention.
- Lego building stimulates the development of fine motor skills.
- Lego Therapy sessions aim to enhance pupil's communication skills, listening, speaking and Makaton signing, as well as widen their vocabulary with a constant use of prepositions and language strategies.
- Team work

Lego therapy enables children to interact with others through the medium of Lego, a material which is often highly motivating to children with autism and related conditions. Pupils are motivated to participate in the group intervention because they are interested in building Lego, and therefore they are more willing to work together as a group. The shared focus on building enables children to learn and practise social skills within a social environment they feel comfortable in.

Curriculum Content

The skills that are necessary to efficiently participate in collaborative Lego building are developed through 3 progressive levels of achievement, each of them with specific goals and challenges:

Individual Therapy and Pivotal Skills: This is an optional stage that can be carried out depending on the skills and ability of the group of young people.

Activities should focus in 3 areas:

1- Building fine motor and visual-motor skills and basic building skills. In order to prepare the pupil for collaborative building, they need to develop basic motor and cognitive skills such as **sorting, piece assembly matching, imitating, etc.**

2- Self control and compliance with routines.

3- Social interaction and communication skills.

Collaborative building: This level introduces the roles of the Builder and the Supplier. The pupils work in pairs with adult supervision to build simple Lego sets, whose level of complexity can be gradually increased.

The pupils will learn and practice language strategies and prepositions as an independent activity alongside with collaborative building in pairs. Activities should focus on:

- 1- The use of verbal descriptors of shape, colour and function, supported with Makaton

signing.

2- The efficient use of prepositions and language strategies to express the location of a Lego piece, supported with Makaton signing.

Collaborative Building with 2 peers: The participants work in groups of three and each one has a different role:

Engineer: Describes which parts are required and where to put them according to the instructions.

Supplier: Searches through the bricks to find the piece that the engineer has specified, and gives that piece to the builder.

Builder: Receives the pieces from the supplier and constructs the Lego set according to the verbal and visual directions from the engineer.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Lego therapy has been found to be effective for children with autism and related conditions, and groups usually consist of three children. However, a scaffolding approach must be applied in order for the pupils to move progressively through the different stages of Lego Collaborative Building learning curve.

Sessions should be run on a weekly basis with facilitation from a teacher. Teaching assistants are suitable helpers and facilitators.

The instructions may need to be modified, simplified, laminated and/or enlarged.

Sessions are structured and, when the pupils acquire the required skills to perform the three roles in Lego Collaborative Building. They will take it in turns to play one of three roles (the builder, the supplier or the engineer).

Collaborative Freestyle Building

Freestyle building allows pupils to build their own creations using non-specific Lego pieces. Freestyle building involves a demand for communication, showing ideas and joint attention collaboration.

Allowing group members free-play time to be creative and participate in fantasy play with the figures and sets, leads to increase spontaneous interaction among the class group.

Monitoring and Assessment

Assessment will be carried out by means of observation from the teacher and the teaching assistants in a continuous evaluation of the pupils' abilities.

Individual Therapy and Pivotal Skills:

Participants should be able to demonstrate these abilities:

- Sorting similar Lego pieces by shape, colour and size.
- Find specific pieces that match a picture of that piece.

- Identifying and labelling pieces using verbal and descriptors of colour, shape and function (brick, hinge, ladder, window, door, tool, floor plate, roof, shingle...)
- Combining pieces
- Following simple visual instructions.

Once they are able to collaborate with an adult and stay focused without having to use external reinforcement at every step, the pupils are ready for the next stage.

Collaborative building: Participants should be able to demonstrate these abilities:

- Use and understanding of key prepositions, both verbally and using Makaton.
- Turn-taking
- All the pivotal skills and abilities previously assessed must be continuously evaluated.

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the Lego Therapy curriculum, irrespective of race, gender or disability. Suitable resources and learning environments will be made available to give children access to the learning required.

Where particular pupils have additional needs which must be addressed in order to overcome barriers to learning – for example, as the result of disability, medical needs, sensory impairment – teachers will take account of these requirements.

Cross-curricular Links

Lego Therapy naturally links with other curriculum areas. For example:-

- English: Use of verbal descriptors, adjectives and prepositions. Listening to and interpreting instructions.
- Maths: Problem solving, counting the number of studs in a lego piece, parallel lines, shapes and size.
- Science: Lego themed packs can be linked to Science topics (The Zoo Lego Creative Bucket relates to Zoo Animals)
- Social Communication: interaction, turn-taking, joint attention, social activities, etc.

Subject: Lego Therapy

Subject Leader:

Date: May 2015

Date ratified by Governors: June 9th 2015

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