



LEGO®CLUB

Guidance Handbook



What is LEGO®-Based Therapy?

The definition of the Danish word *Legø* is to play well (Whitworth, 2009). LEGO®-Based Therapy or LEGO® Club is a social development programme for children with Autism Spectrum Conditions. It is based on collaborative LEGO® play and involves children working together to build LEGO® models in pairs and in teams of three or more. It is argued that as a result, participants experience a greater motivation to initiate social contact and engage in sustained interactions with others. (LeGoff, 2004)

The History

LEGO®-Based Therapy was created by Daniel LeGoff, a psychologist in the USA, after he noticed two children in his waiting room, playing together using their LEGO® sets. The children had not shown any previous motivation to interact and it seemed likely that their common interest in LEGO® had given them the enthusiasm to engage socially.

During his weekly LEGO®-Based Therapy with the two children, LeGoff allocated specific joint and interactive jobs within the LEGO® building and made the children take turns to carry out each role. He also provided a structured set of rules, giving the children responsibility for problem-solving, using the rules as guidance. The resulting interaction promoted the development of key skills which were previously challenging for children with Autism Spectrum Conditions to gain. These key skills include, joint attention, sharing, collaboration, verbal and non-verbal communication and conflict resolution. The adult was able to take the role of facilitator, highlighting the presence of any problems and encouraging pupils to come up with solutions. These experiences resulted in the children with Autism Spectrum Conditions gaining a greater understanding of each others points of view.

What happens during LEGO® Club?

LEGO® -Based Therapy Group sessions should last for between 45 minutes and 1 hour and should be delivered once a week on the same day and at the same time. Children should be prepared by a Social Story™ before their first session of LEGO® -Based Therapy takes place.

For pupils taking part in LEGO® Club therapy based sessions, parental consent should be sought and each pupil should have a LEGO® -Based Therapy file, with signed consent forms, attendance, communication placemats, IEPs, Annual Targets, school therapy and evaluation forms included, which are used throughout the LEGO® -Based Therapy block of sessions. Pupils communication placemats, ibps and positive handling plans also need to be included within this folder. For class teachers delivering whole club LEGO® Club no folder is required.

Pupils should be allocated into the different levels by either the ASC Co-ordinator and/or LEGO® Club leader and class teacher. These levels are, Individual LEGO® Club, Collaboration

LEGO® Club (Pairs/Two Peers) and Group LEGO® Club. Checklists of skills at this level have been provided. (please see attached documents) The formats below should be followed depending on what level pupils have been assigned to. These formats should be displayed during the LEGO® Based Therapy sessions. Visual timers in the form of sand timers, timed timers, clocks or green/red step cards should be used to support the pupils throughout the session.

Lego® -Based Therapy Formats

Lego Club Session Individual Format

20 minute sessions

1. Introduction **2 minutes** (greet and rules)
2. Pre-Building Skills **10 minutes** (pupils takes on role of builder, working following skills - one skill each week)
 - **Role 1. Builder - finds and puts the Lego pieces together**

SKILLS

- Sorting by colour, shape and size
- Matching 3D pieces
- Matching 2D images (from instructions) with actual pieces
- Piece assembly
- Imitation
- Turn-taking
- Simple collaborative building

(only when every skill mastered above will you continue onto following)

3. Building Skills **5 minutes** (small LEGO® kits with visual building plans provided - taking it in turns to perform set roles)

- **Role 1. Designer** - tells everyone what to build
- **Role 2. Builder** - finds and puts the Lego pieces together

4. Tidy up **1 minutes**

5. Circle time **2 minute** (welcome to Lego Club certificate)

Lego Club Session Pairs and two peers Format

30 minute sessions

1. Introduction **2 minutes** (greet and rules or set goals)

2. LEGO® set building **10 minutes** (small LEGO® kits with visual building plans provided - taking it in turns to perform set roles)

- **Role 1. Designer** - tells everyone what to build
- **Role 2. Builder** - finds and puts the Lego pieces together

3. LEGO® freestyle building **10 minutes** (pupils agree on a LEGO® project and build collaboratively, taking it in turns to perform set roles but without visual instruction sheets)

4. Tidy up **3 minutes**

5. Circle time **5 minutes** (showing lego creations and certificates/prizes)

Lego Club Session Group Format

45 minute session

1. Introduction **5 minutes** (greet and rules or set goals)

2. LEGO® set building **15 minutes** (small LEGO® kits with visual building plans provided - taking it in turns to perform set roles)
 - **Role 1. Designer** - tells everyone what to build
 - **Role 2. Sorter** - finds the right Lego pieces
 - **Role 3. Builder** - puts the Lego pieces together
3. LEGO® freestyle building **15 minutes** (pupils agree on a LEGO® project and build collaboratively, taking it in turns to perform set roles but without visual instruction sheets)
4. Tidy up **5 minutes**
5. Circle time **5 minutes** (showing lego creations and certificates/prizes)

During each LEGO® -Based Therapy session children take it in turns to take on the following roles below. These roles/jobs should be displayed during the LEGO® -Based Therapy session. (please see attached documents)

Lego® -Based Therapy Roles/Jobs

Pairs

- **Designer** - tells everyone what to build
- **Builder** - finds and puts the Lego pieces together

Groups

- **Designer** - tells everyone what to build
- **Sorter** - finds the right Lego pieces
- **Builder** - puts the Lego pieces together

During each LEGO® -Based Therapy session the children are reminded of the following rules below. These rules should be displayed during the LEGO® -Based Therapy session. (please see attached documents)

LEGO® -Based Therapy Rules

Foundation Phase Rules

- Clean up and put things back where they came from.
 - Don't put LEGO® bricks in your mouths.

Key Stage Two Rules

- Build things together!
- If you break it you have to fix it or ask for help to fix it.
 - If someone else is using it, don't take it - ask first.
 - Use indoor voices - no yelling.
 - Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
 - Use polite words.
 - Clean up and put things back where they came from.
 - Don't put LEGO® bricks in your mouth.

LEGO® -Based Therapy sessions should finish with a circle time at the end to discuss and share the LEGO® creations.

Over the LEGO®-Based Therapy sessions the following skills below are hoped to be demonstrated by the children.

- "LEGO® Helpers" are encouraged to help out the group activities by pre-sorting pieces when set building, sorting freestyle pieces, checking sets against directions when completed, ordering and cleaning the LEGO® Club room.
- "LEGO® Builders" are able to build small models in a group and design freestyle models with adult help and can competently fill each of the key roles in the set-building process -builder-sorter-designer.

- "LEGO® Creators" are able to build small models in groups and design freestyle models in pairs without adult help and can competently fill each of the key roles in the set-building process -builder-sorter-designer.
- "LEGO® Masters" are able to lead a large group project for which they then coordinate the construction, or presented to the group a desirable group freestyle project.
- "LEGO® Genius" are able to write a movie script or story which they present to the group. The script is then analyzed by the group in terms of how the project can be translated into a LEGO® stop-motion animated short film. The LEGO® master must lead the group in the project, including assigning building tasks for the set and characters, assigning action, voice, and sound-effects roles, controlling or assigning control of the camera and computer and then directing the film itself. The project can take numerous sessions to complete.

Once the children are able to demonstrate one of the particular skills, they are given a certificate to reward their achievement in front of all the children at the end of the therapy session. (please see attached documents)

The Therapist Role

As stated in the beginning LEGO®-Based Therapy or LEGO® Club is a social development programme, which is based on collaborative LEGO® play and involves children working together to build LEGO® models in pairs and in teams of three or more. It is argued that as a result, participants experience a greater motivation to initiate social contact and engage in sustained interactions with others. (LeGoff, 2004)

Remember that the therapist's role is *not* to point out specific social problems or give solutions to social difficulties that may arise during LEGO® Club, rather the therapist's role is to highlight the presence of a problem and help children to come up with their own solutions.

Solutions that children have come up with are practised until they can do it, and the therapist can remind children of strategies in the future if similar difficulties arise.

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