

# Using a Lego Therapy approach to develop language and social communication skills

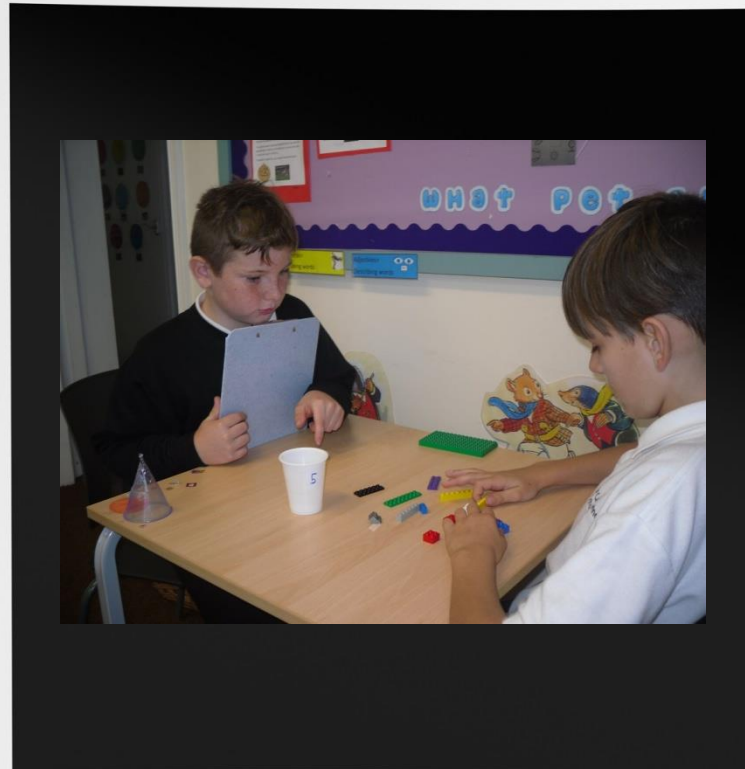
## Evidence Based Practice



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### Background

- Research suggests that 'Lego Therapy' can improve social competence for children with ASD at the end of intervention (LeGoff 2004) and longer-term (LeGoff and Sherman, 2006) compared to no treatment and other approaches.
- There is less research that looks directly at the development of language skills using Lego Therapy however informal observations during the initial stages of the project suggested these were a key area for targeting with scope for development. It was also evident that some students were not yet ready for small group work and would benefit from working at the paired level.
- This project therefore used the principles of Lego Therapy aiming to increase directional and sequential language in addition to basic social communication skills.



Students taking part in a paired brick building challenge

### The Activity

- 12 students aged 9-12 were selected for intervention. Students had diagnoses of DLD or ASD
- Students received therapy in their class groups once a week for 10 weeks.
- Intervention was delivered by two SLTs and an LSA. Some sessions were attended by an OT
- Students were placed in skill-matched pairs with a peer or adult. They completed differentiated structured and creative builds each session. Each had a specific skill to work on and were provided with visuals to support this
- The use of Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS goals) was applied to help track skill development and make observational assessment more robust.

### The Impact

- Improvements were seen across all students regardless of diagnosis, evidenced both by increases on GAS goal scales and qualitative observations.
- Students increased their use of directional and sequential language as well as their basic social communication skills (seen through GAS improvements). Students also demonstrated increased resilience, tolerance of others and problem solving skills (seen through informal observation.)
- Results suggest that paired, collaborative brick-building can be effective for those not yet ready for small groups. Improvements were seen in language and social-skills in students with ASD and those with DLD within the brick building tasks.



### Recommendations

- Practitioners to consider
  - paired work for students not yet ready for small group Lego Therapy. Approach can be used for students with DLD as well as those with ASD
  - Introducing skill aims related to sequential and positional language as well as social communication skills
  - Use of GAS goals as a way of measuring progress and making observations more robust
- Future research to examine generalisation of skills outside of brick building activities

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Thanks to the staff and students  
of St Catherine's school

