

Lego Therapy

LEGO®-based Therapy is a social development intervention for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Social communication and social interaction are two of the four areas of difference for those diagnosed with ASD. Lego therapy helps to engage young people with ASD in a social activity by adding structure, clear rules and clear boundaries. LEGO Therapy was originated by Daniel LeGoff in the US and researched by Gina Gómez de la Cuesta, Simon Baron-Cohen and colleagues at the Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge. It encourages young people with ASD to communicate with one another and solve a problem by building in pairs or groups of three. Each young person is given a specific role which has rules that they have to follow. There are also group rules that everyone in the group has to follow.

Lego Therapy Session Goals

Improve motivation to initiate social contact with peers.

The way the roles are designed means that young people interacting with one another is essential to put together the structure they are building. The popularity of Lego help to motivate the young people to engage in the activity and the visual instructions that come with Lego kits make the activity AS friendly.

Improve ability to sustain interaction with peers for a period of time.

Lego therapy sessions can start as very brief sessions if sustained interaction is a significant difficulty for the individual. This can start with very simple Lego structures as a measure of the length of the sessions, and move on to more complex builds which will extend the sessions.

Overcome aloofness and/or rigidity.

Lego therapy is designed for both young people who have the need to take control of social interactions and those who lack the confidence to express themselves. The roles are broken up so that one person is leading the build and 'directs' the others in the group. This is then good for the more controlling individuals who have to accept it when others are in this role, and those who lack confidence as they are given the time to fulfil this role.

Learn turn-taking in relation to social interaction.

This refers to both taking turns at the different roles of Lego Therapy, but also learning the turn-taking of conversation and interaction. Rules such as 'only one-person speaks at a time' and 'listen to others when they are talking' are important for this. Generalise these skills to other group activities in the classroom and unstructured

social time. Staff can remind young people of the rules of Lego Therapy during other group activities, to help to add structure to interaction in general.

Rules

Below is a list of rules that every individual in the group is asked to try and follow:

- One person speaks at a time.
- Listen to others when they are talking.
- Use a calm quiet voice.
- If you break something, you have to fix it or ask for help to fix it.
- Use kind polite words • keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Don't put the Lego bricks in your mouth.
- At the end, tidy everything away and put it back where it came from.
- Any more you find appropriate as you continue to run the sessions.

Roles

Lego sessions can be run with pairs or groups of three. For young people new to Lego therapy it is advised that they start in pairs and see how they get on. Then you can move on to groups of three. Below are the roles for both working in pairs and in groups of 3, together with the rules for each role.

Engineer (in 2s)

- Read the instructions.
- Don't show the instructions to the builder.
- Tell the builder which pieces they need and how to put them together.
- Listen to the builder if they have any questions.
- Do not touch the bricks.

Builder (in 2s)

- Listen to the engineer's instructions.
- Find the pieces that the engineer describes.
- Put the pieces together in the way the engineer explains.
- Do not look at the engineer's instructions.
- Ask the engineer questions if you are unsure of something.

Engineer (in 3s)

- Explain to the group how what you are building will look ° Explain to the supplier what pieces they will need.
- Explain to the builder how to build it.

- Do not touch the bricks.

Supplier (in 3s)

- Listen to the engineer and follow their instructions.
- Find the correct pieces as described by the engineer.
- Give the correct pieces to the builder.
- Don't look at the engineer's instructions.
- Ask the engineer questions if you are unsure of something.

Builder (in 3s)

- Follow the engineer's instructions.
- Collect the pieces from the supplier.
- Put them together as described by the engineer.
- Don't look at the engineer's instructions.
- Ask the engineer questions if you are unsure of something.
- Role of the adult.