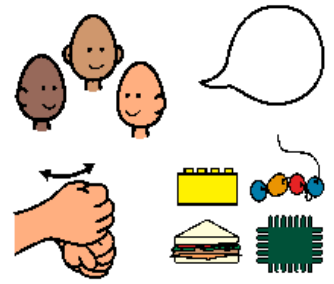


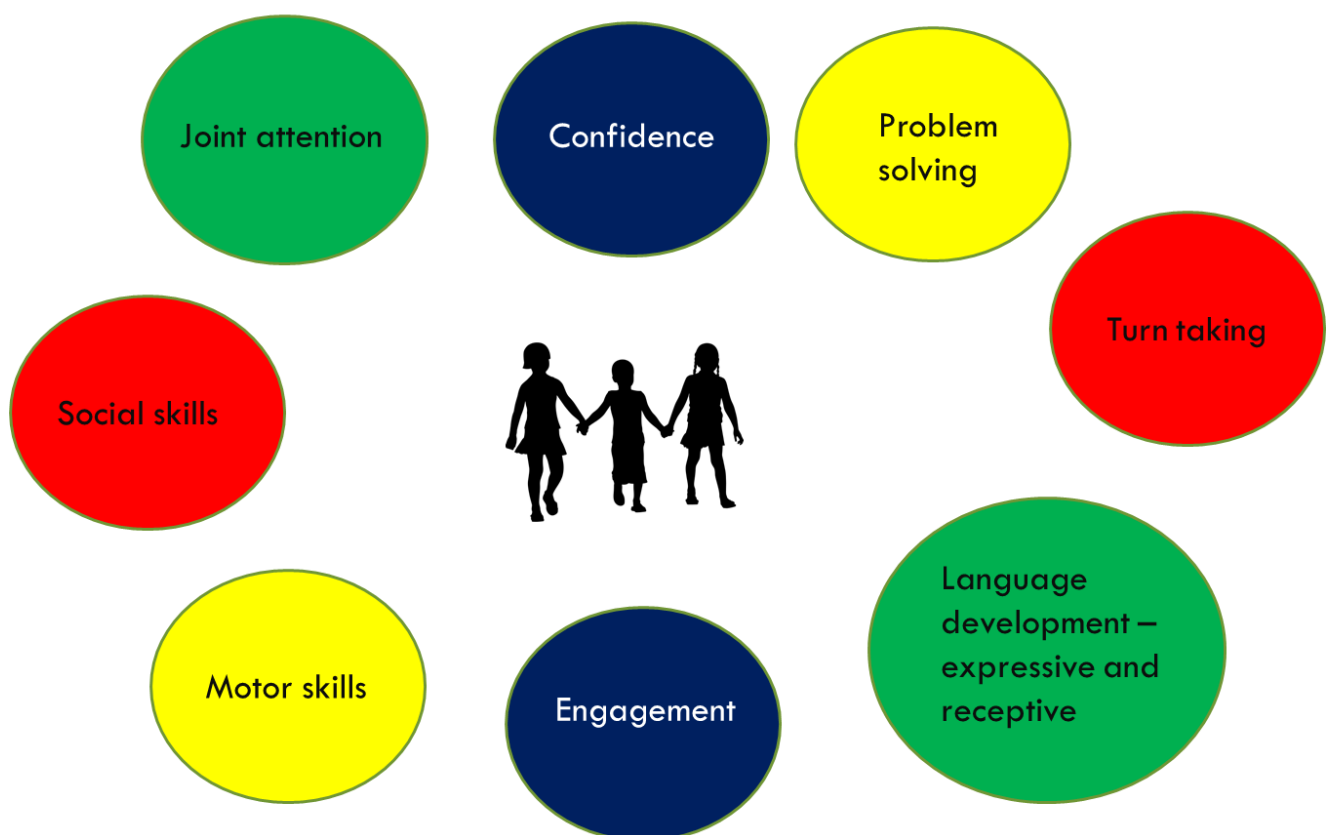
Playwell



What is it?

Playwell began from a staff training session in Lego Based Therapy (LBT) at St. Anthony's School. LBT was coined by Dr Daniel B LeGoff (a paediatric neuropsychologist) in the mid 1990's. It aimed to help children with Asperger's Syndrome and high functioning Autism develop interaction and social skills.

Following the training, sessions were carried out within the ASD Department, under direction from Speech and Language Therapists. As the sessions progressed it was realised that although they were very beneficial and helped a wide range of skills (see below) it could be tailored to suit our pupils.



How it was changed and can be linked to the curriculum

The name 'Playwell' was chosen for our programme. This is the translation of the Danish word 'Lego' to English and so recognises and keeps the foundation and concept of LBT.

To make LBT more accessible to our pupils, sentence strips were created using Boardmaker. This was to help our pupils understand their role in the session, construct sentences and communicate instructions to their peers. In addition to these, symbols for colours, positions and some questions were made. These could be used for prompts as well as with the sentence strips.

From carrying out the sessions it became clear that the concept could be applied to other resources. It will work with anything that has instructions and an end product to compare the finished product and photograph with. This means that Playwell can be applied across curriculum areas and linked to the planning within the school.

Making it accessible to pupils

To make Playwell accessible to pupils outside of a Speech and Language caseload, a set of targets were compiled (**please see below for an example*). The target list covers a wide range of skills and areas that pupils may need help with and therefore provides a system for referrals by staff. It has been separated into the following areas:

- Listening
- Receptive language
- Expressive language / Speech
- Turn taking
- Social communication skills

Each area is broken down into a progression of relevant skills. Pupils can start with the first one, or any point through the section depending on what skills they need to try and improve. In addition to the specific skills there is a blank target for each section. This enables staff to refer for a target that is relevant to the section but not accounted for in the list.

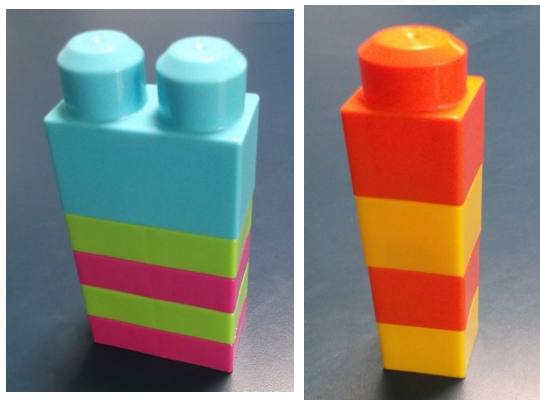
***2. Receptive language**

- A) Will correctly follow 1 key word instruction (containing bridging language of colour and positional vocabulary, ie. 'colour' 'on' 'colour')
- B) Will correctly follow 2 key word instruction (containing bridging language of colour and positional vocabulary, ie. put the 'red' on 'left' of the green brick)
- C) Will correctly follow 3 key word instruction containing positional concepts on / under
- D) Will correctly follow 3 key word instruction containing positional concepts end / middle
- E) Will correctly follow instruction containing 2 parts (eg. Involving 'and') during the structured task.
- F) _____ (blank for own target connected to receptive language)

Levels

Levels have been put in place that have a progression of language comprehension and development.

The different levels incorporate bridging language, which is language given but not needed to be understood at the time. It is used to begin to familiarise the pupils with language needed as they progress through the levels.



Level 1 (linked to Target 2a)

This level has a 1 key word focus. The only focus is 'colour'.

The instruction will be 'colour' on 'colour' without size or position being needed as the model is vertical and there is only one option to choose for both position and size of piece.

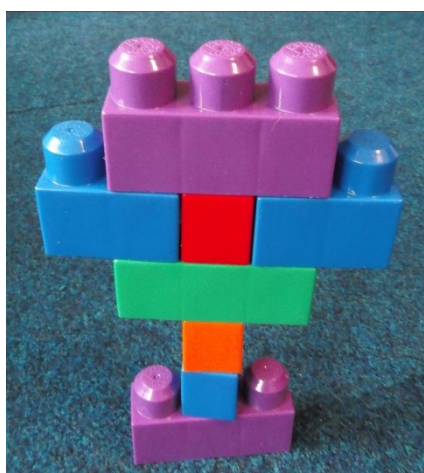
This level has bridging language of colour and positional vocabulary which begins to familiarise children with language they need as they progress .



Level 2 (linked to Target 2b)

This level has a 2 key word focus of 'colour' and 'position'. There should still only be one option of each colour used, so size is not needed. This level begins to use the bridging language of 'position' familiarised with in the previous level.

This level has bridging language of size, colour and positional vocabulary.

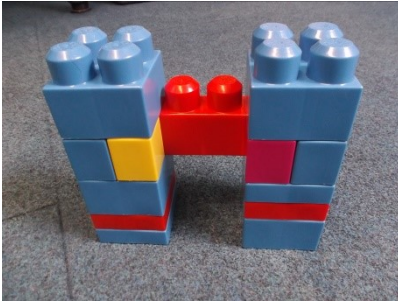


Level 3 (linked to Targets 2d, 2e and 2f)

This is a much more complex level with all the concepts previous familiarised with being utilised. There is a 3 key word focus of 'colour', 'size' and 'position', and sometimes even 2 positions being needed, i.e. front left, back right.

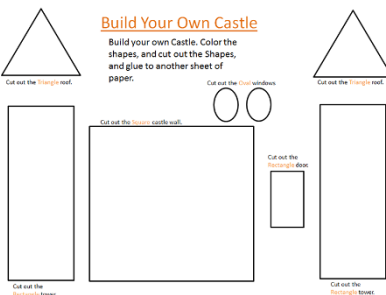
Within level 3, there is a higher and harder aspect. As well as colour, size and position being needed, there is also the concept of 'leave a gap'.

Linking Playwell to the Curriculum

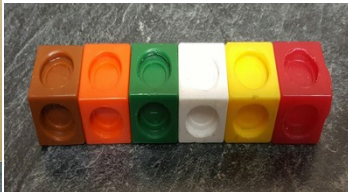


English related

Playwell was linked to the topic of Macbeth. A castle model was made and the session was carried out with the whole



As well as 3D models, Playwell can be used with 2D resources. An example of this is the 'Build your Own Castle' worksheet. The pieces could be cut out before the session and then photographs used as instructions in the same way as for blocks.



Maths related

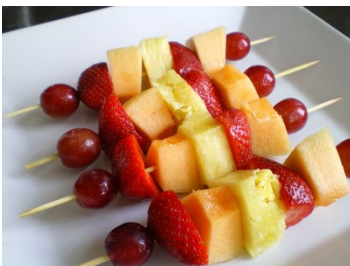
Playwell incorporates colour, shape, size and position and so fits very well with Maths.

Photographic instructions and language around colour and position are still needed in the same way as when using blocks.

Food Technology

Playwell can also be applied to this subject.

Either written or photographic instructions can be used to help create fruit kebabs, sandwiches and other items. As with the other creations, as long as there is a set finished product anything can be used.



Extensions and grouping structure

Extensions

Following on from the basic Playwell format, extensions have been implemented. One is 'Freebuild' which is beneficial to add on to the end of a normal Playwell session. The concept of this is that pupils build a model together without direction or instructions from photographs, peers or adults. This challenges their ability to accept others choices. Bricks / items are provided and placed in the middle of the table. One pupil chooses a piece and passes it to the next person. They then add another piece to the initial piece. This carries on until all the pieces are used. At the end, the pupils discuss what they think the model that they have built together is. This encourages imagination, acceptance, collaborative play and Theory of Mind. It is hoped that these skills can transfer outside of Playwell and that imaginative play with others (or alone) becomes more frequent.

As well as Freebuild, 'Playwell Leader' has been introduced. During this, each pupil has identical pieces and one pupil is the 'leader'. The leader has control over the choice and position of the pieces being used. The other pupils observe which colour, size and shaped piece is used, where it is placed and copy this. The Leader needs to watch the progression of the model and ensure it is correct. If it is not, they need to communicate with their peers to inform them which part is incorrect and that the relevant part / section needs to be rebuilt. The focus on this style of session is not necessarily spoken language, but engagement, joint attention, accepting others decisions and problem solving. This style of session can be more suitable for some pupils who find it easier without the structure of a set model to build. It allows them to be creative. And can produce some wonderful creations. Once the building is complete, as with Freebuild, pupils can discuss what they think the end result is, again encouraging Theory of Mind.

Grouping structure

A benefit of Playwell, and the extensions, is that the grouping of pupils can be very varied. The sessions are perfect for grouping different ability pupils together, which can be an excellent form of modelling skills for pupils. Where you have low and high ability pupils, the model and roles can be changed to suit the individual pupils each time. In a scenario like this, a Level 2 or 3 can be used and the lower ability pupil would have the role of supplier, leaving the engineer and builder roles for the higher ability pupils. This allows the higher ability to use and comprehend slightly more complex language for instructing, whilst remaining appropriate for the lower ability child who needs to find the correct pieces. During one session, the level of the models can be changed to suit their ability as the pupils change their roles. This ensures that pupils are challenged adequately during the session.

Playwell is a very adaptable and valuable tool that can be applied across the school. It suits all abilities and can be enjoyed by verbal and non-verbal pupils due to the resources that have been created. It has been implemented with the Year 7 pupils in English this year and links very well with the speech and language aims and targets. The possibilities for it are endless and it will continue to evolve and grow with the curriculum and pupils needs.