Home Learning Challenge

In this week's home learning challenge, we would like to focus on a toy that you probably have at home and one that you have probably even played with yourself as a child - good old Lego! It is such a great resource that has really stood the test of time and children (and adults) love to create various structures and buildings with it. However, Lego doesn't have to be limited to building. There are so many ways that it can be integrated into learning environments and used as a key tool to extend children's learning across the curriculum. Let's take a look at how you can use Lego at home to support development in phonics and mathematics.

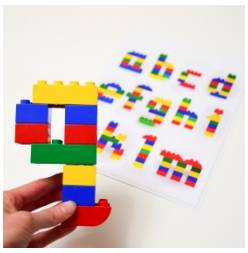
Phonics

Lego can be used as an exciting new way to extend children's development in phonics from its early stages through to reading and even sentence building! This probably works best with Mega Blocks, although Duplo works really well too.

A great place to start would be by looking at initial sounds. You will need two pieces of Lego per sound for this: simply write a letter on one block, and then tape a picture of an object which begins with that sound onto it. Then challenge your child to build towers, matching the initial sound to the picture.

As your child becomes more confident in their reading, you can make this activity more challenging by taking away the pictures and having just letters written on the blocks instead; they can then be challenged to build CVC words using the Lego. This can be scaffolded for younger or less confident learners by writing a CVC word on one of the longer bricks and then getting them to match the letters with those written on single bricks, building their word on top of the pre-written word. This is also a great way to help them learn the letters in their names. Then, once they're ready, children can use these pre-written words to build whole sentences!

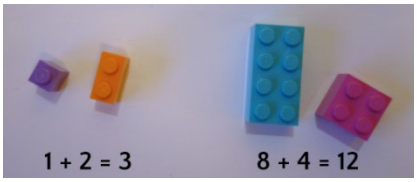
Lego can also be used as a key resource to support some letter formation. Give your child a sheet of paper with a letter template on and then encourage them to place lego on top of it, building the letter. This is a great way to encourage reluctant mark makers to begin thinking about how letters are formed. Encouraging them to trace the letter with their finger before building, or trace the built letter once it is completed, will also support children in getting the movements that they will need when it comes to actually writing the letter.



Maths

As with the above example, the Lego can be used to support numeral formation-exactly the same principle and procedure as above, just swap the letters for numerals!

Lego can also be used to support numeral ordering and sequencing. Simply write numbers on individual bricks, and challenge your child to build a tower in the correct order. This is brilliant for all learners, as it can be extended as far as your child needs it to be.You can also extend it by drawing dots above, below, or next to the numeral, as this will support your child in matching the numeral to its appropriate quantity.



You may wish to use Lego in a similar way to Numicon, as an adding resource. Children can be encouraged to place two different blocks together and count the number of dots on them. In order to best scaffold the development of understanding addition, children should be encouraged to count the dots on one piece of Lego, before being given another piece to count; by getting them to say the value of the first piece before counting the next piece. You can also support the development of counting on skills, a valuable first step in addition! You can also give them the language of "plus" and "equals", in order to truly cement this skill and support their learning.

A final way that you may want to explore Lego is by using it as a measuring tool. Encourage your child to build a huge tower and then find things around the house to measure. If you have enough Lego you may even want to measure yourselves. Each time you measure something, model to your child how to measure from the bottom of the tower, and then count how many blocks tall/long/wide it is. Encouraging your child to say "It's……..blocks tall/long/wide" will further support them in developing this skill. This is a great way to introduce measuring to them, in a context which is relevant to them. They may find centimetres a bit tricky and abstract, but every child knows roughly how big a Lego block is!

Enjoy exploring these different activities with your child-as always, we'd love to see photos!