

## SMALL CONSTRUCTION

Small Construction provides children with the opportunity to explore and create using high-quality, open-ended, unstructured materials. These can include resources such as Duplo, Lego and Mobilo.

Through designing and constructing unique structures, children can experiment with new ways to build, this supports 'out of the box' thinking, encouraging children to put their knowledge and ideas to the test.

Typically, Small Construction resources are plastic and therefore more robust. The properties of these materials mean that children can click, snap and connect smaller and more intricate pieces together to create structures and models, enabling them to add to and enhance their creations.

The durability of these resources mean that children can extend their learning by transporting their models to different play areas, both indoors and outdoors.

## CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

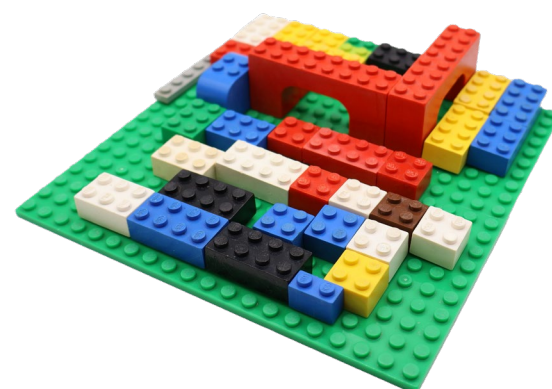
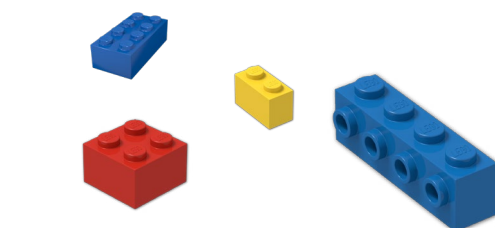
### Health & Wellbeing

Small Construction play can support children to build confidence and persevere when trying to solve problems, resulting in a sense of achievement.

Children have opportunities to express their feelings through construction, learning to process emotions such as frustration, disappointment and sadness.

Construction play encourages collaboration and teamwork, supporting children to develop relationships. Through working together, children take turns, share ideas, problem solve, and learn from each other's challenges and successes.

The manipulation and connection of smaller pieces promotes the development of fine-motor skills, hand-eye coordination and dexterity.



### Literacy

Children explore and develop new vocabulary as they work through building processes, describe their creations and answer questions.

Through provocations such as pictorial booklets and instructions, children can learn to follow sequences and processes. This can inspire children to experiment with recording their own processes in a variety of ways, for example, using photographs or talking pegs.

Engaging in imaginative play around their creations, children develop narratives that support storytelling. This can lead onto collaborative storytelling as children bring their creations together.

### Maths & Numeracy

Through planning models and creations, children develop understanding surrounding mathematical concepts, such as ordinal numbers and positional language. For example, the use of "first, next, last" and "on top, underneath, beside."

Small Construction gives children opportunities to investigate 3D shapes as they experiment with fitting pieces together by turning and connecting.

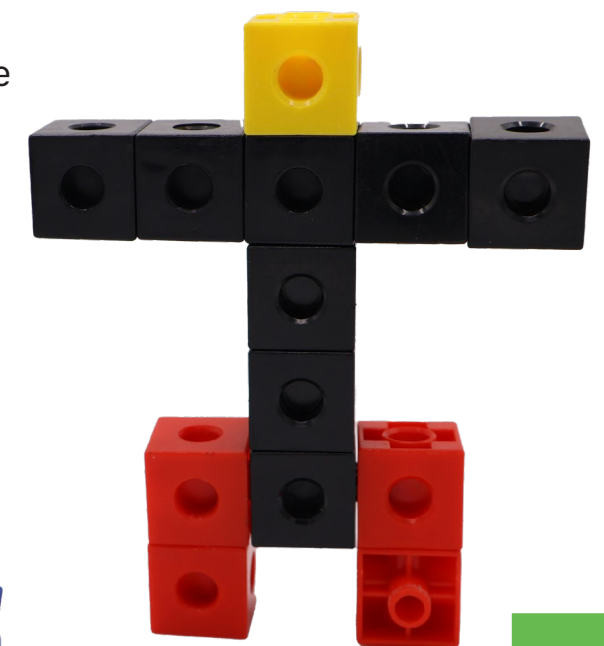
As children play with Small Construction materials, they have the opportunity to explore early symmetry, patterns and colour concepts.

### Other

Through Small Construction, children can explore the use of different materials and share their reasoning for selecting these.

Children have the opportunity to work both on their own and with others, using their curiosity and imagination to solve problems.

Through experimenting with building different models, such as bridges and towers, children can recognise engineering in the world around them.



## ROLE OF THE ADULT

Practitioners should ensure this space is well-maintained with a sufficient amount of each resource available to enable children to fulfil their creative ideas. Adults should inspect resources regularly, removing any damaged pieces.

Through the use of higher-order questions, practitioners can positively impact the longevity of children's play and encourage perseverance and resilience.

Adults should support children to take the lead in documenting the processes behind making their own constructions. For example, creating an instruction booklet.

Given there are a number of small parts in this area, it's essential for practitioners to risk-assess throughout the year to ensure the safety of all learners.

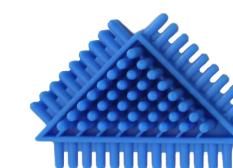


## RESOURCE IDEAS

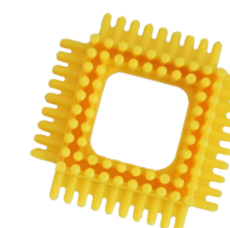
|                |                                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Lego           | Octoplay                                  |
| Stickle Bricks | KNEX                                      |
| Duplo          | Wooden Meccano                            |
| Mobilo         | Natural loose parts                       |
| Magnatiles     | Construction blocks with nuts/bolts/poles |
| Gears          | Linking cubes                             |

Commercially created pictorial booklets can be used to challenge learning and play, but do not have to be available at all times.

## REFLECTION POINTS



- Do practitioners observe this area regularly, providing resources and using high-quality interactions to extend children's learning and interests?
- To what extent do staff value and understand the skills that children can potentially develop in this area?
- Do the resources on offer challenge children in a developmentally appropriate way?
- Consider how many types of Small Construction are available at any one time. Over-resourcing this area can lead to overwhelming children, resulting in a lack of purpose in their play.



## ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

Small Construction play can produce 'purposeful noise', therefore, consideration should be given to its location within the room.

This small defined space should be separate from the Block Play area, however, ideally close enough to allow children to extend Small Construction learning into it. For example, making cars using Mobilo, then playing with them in a block town.

A table can be a useful addition to provide a level building surface.

