

# PHYSICAL SKILLS

## Physical Skills Development

Chemicals that cause the brain neurons to develop and make connections are produced by the movements of the muscles; so movement is the key to creating those neural networks in the brain that will allow children to function optimally. Early movement experiences are vital to laying the foundation of brain circuits dedicated to motor control and should be continued to develop a positive attitude about habitual physical activity which sets the foundation for a healthy lifestyle. Children have a natural urge to be physically active and learn through physical experiences and this urge involves a constant challenge to their motor skills - stacking and building with DUPLO will improve these skills.

The *6 Bricks* activities that follow will help to:

- provide children with many sensory-motor experiences and fine and gross motor experiences
- increase the blood flow which feeds the brain to enhance neural activity
- improve muscle tone, balance, proprioception, kinesthetic memory, hand-eye co-ordination
- develop skills of differentiation, lateralization, crossing mid-line, lateral dominance

Let's use those *6 Bricks* to develop the whole child - the thinking, feeling, moving child!

*"You'll get mixed up, of course, as you already know. You'll get mixed up with many strange birds as you go. So be sure when you step. Step with great care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act. Just never forget to be dexterous and deft. And never mix up your right foot with your left."*

From Dr Seuss -  
"Oh, The Places You'll Go!"



# STUCK ON RED



- This is a game for the whole class to play outside.
- Each child takes their red brick outside with them to the playground.
- One child is selected to be the catcher. That child does not need a brick.
- The other children run around in the pre-determined area, holding their red brick.
- Once they have been tagged by the catcher, they have to stand still and balance the brick on their head, until they are “freed” by one of the other children.
- The children “free” their friend by removing the brick from their head and handing it back to them.
- A new catcher may be selected after a while.



# SHARK & FISHIES

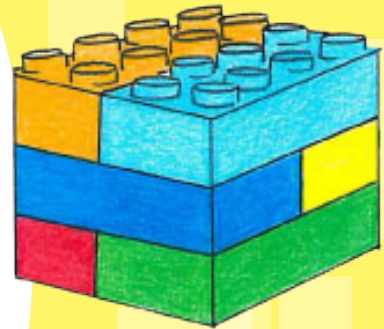
- This is a game for the whole class to play outside.
- Pile all the bricks together; work together to create three or four large squares with the bricks.
- Place these squares in random spaces within your play area. These squares represent “safe areas”.
- One child is selected to be the shark and the rest of the class are the fishies.
- The shark calls out, “Run, fishies, run!” The children run around, trying to avoid being caught by the shark. They run to a safe area (squares of bricks).
- As long as they are in, or touching a safe area, the shark cannot catch them.
- When shark calls out, “Run, fishies, run!” then they have to leave their safe area and run to another.
- Whoever is caught by the shark, becomes a shark helper.





# UNDER AND OVER

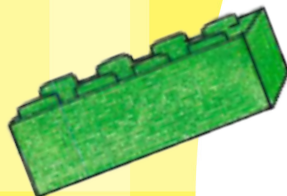
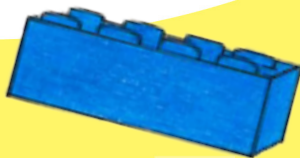
- Work in groups of 6.
- Each child makes a cube with their 6 bricks. Stand in a circle; place all the cubes in the middle.
- Leader has one cube in his / her hand.
- All children turn to face the right; Leader passes the cube overhead to the one behind, who then passes the cube under his / her legs to the one behind, who then passes it overhead, etc.
- Keep alternating under / over movements, until the cube gets back to the Leader.
- See which team wins!



## HOT POTATO

- Children work in groups of 6; all make a strong cube with your bricks.
- Sit in a circle; place all the cubes in the middle.
- Leader picks up one of the cubes and passes it as quickly as possible to the next child - it is a "hot potato".
- The cube is passed from one child to the other as if it were boiling hot!

Q: *How quickly can you move that cube in the circle without dropping it?*



# BRICK AND SPOON

- Children work in groups of 4 - 6.
- Give each child in the group a dessert spoon.
- Ask the children to pick up one of their 6 bricks and balance it on their spoon.
- Ask the children to walk around the room with the brick balanced on the spoon.

Q: Can you do it without dropping your brick?  
Q: Can you move faster and still keep the brick balanced?

## Variations:

- Go outside and hold a 'Brick and Spoon' race.
- Vary the activity, e.g. organise children into teams of 6; give each team a name and a leader.
- Teams race against each other. When the teacher says "Go" the leader moves to a designated point with the brick and spoon - leaves it at the point and runs back to the next team member waiting - touches that child's hand and moves to the back of the row.
- That child then runs to collect the brick and spoon and moves back to the team, etc. until the leader lands up in the front again. The team that sits first is the winner.
- Vary instruction and activities for each race, e.g. involve skipping / hopping / running backwards / moving between obstacles.



# CUBE CATCHES

- Each child makes a cube using their 6 bricks. Stand with their cube in a circle.

Q: Can you balance the cube on your head?  
Q: Can you hold it under your chin?  
Q: Can you toss it up in the air and catch it 3 times?  
Q: Can you clap before you catch the cube?  
Q: Can you toss it from one hand to the other?  
Q: Can you hold it between your knees and walk?  
Q: What else can you do with your cube?





# PASS THE CUBE



- Children work in groups of 6; all make a strong cube with your bricks.
- Sit in a circle; place all the cubes in the middle.
- Leader picks up one of the cubes and passes to the next child and so on until everyone has touched and passed the cube.
- Add another cube to pass around. Keep adding cubes to see how many you can pass without getting confused or breaking the chain of passes.



## CUBE CROUCH

- Work with a partner. Both children build their six bricks into a cube.
- Stand back to back with your partner, holding your cube in both hands.
- Move down together to crouch on the floor - your backs pressing against each other.
- Balance the cube on your head whilst crouching in this position.

Q: *How long can you hold that position?*

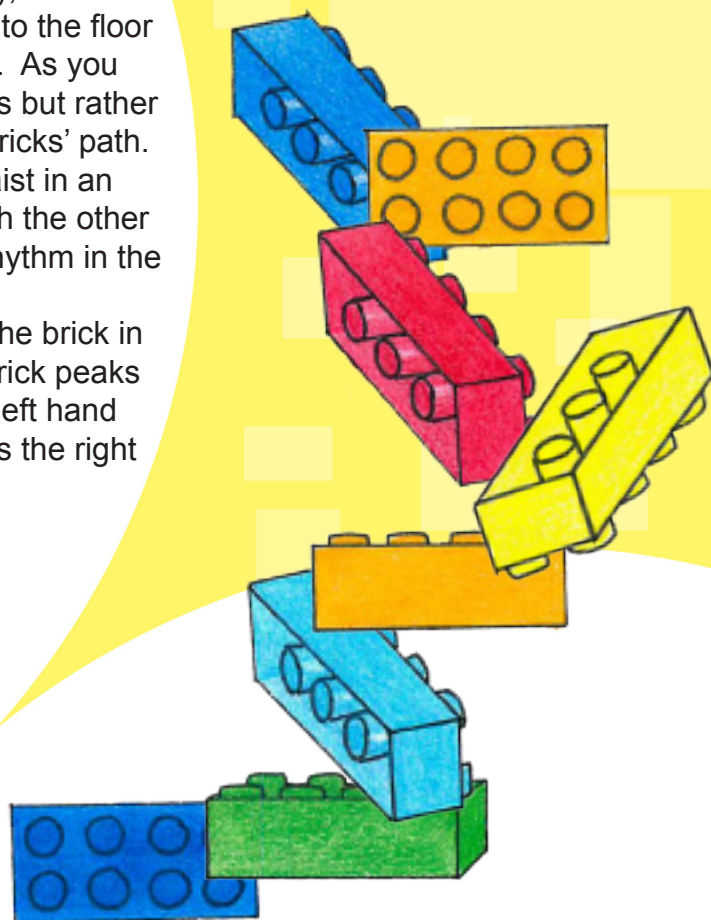
- Use one cube between the two of you - hold the cube in both hands and twist your torso to pass the cube to your partner.
- Your partner does the same and passes it back to you.
- Continue in this way until you have done ten passes.
- Move up and return to a standing position.

Q: *Can you hold one cube between your 2 backs and move from a standing position to a crouch?*



# JUGGLE MASTER

- Children individually use the bricks to learn how to juggle. (The bricks will not bounce and may be a bit noisy when they fall.)
- Begin with just 2 bricks. Stand comfortably, feet apart, shoulders square, forearms parallel to the floor and always keep elbows close to the body. As you begin to juggle try not to look at your hands but rather keep your eyes at the peak region of the bricks' path.
- Begin with one brick. Throw it from the waist in an arc to about forehead height and catch with the other hand. Do this until you can feel an easy rhythm in the motion of the brick. Do both directions.
- Now hold one brick in each hand. Throw the brick in the usual arc with the right hand. As the brick peaks above the left hand, throw the brick in the left hand underneath the first brick, throwing towards the right hand.

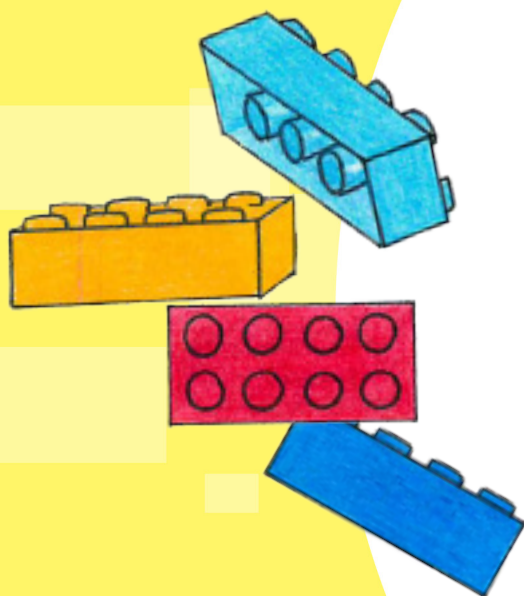
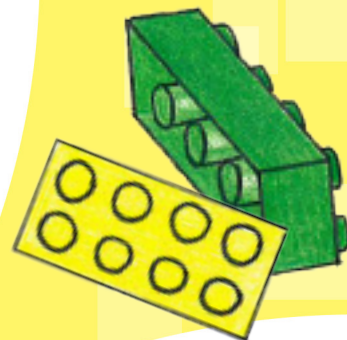


- Catch the brick in the left hand and then the second brick in the right hand.
- Repeat this step several times making sure that you alternate the hand throwing first.
- Hold two brick in your right hand and one in your left hand. Throw the first brick in your right hand towards the left. When this brick peaks, throw the brick in your left hand underneath the first brick towards the right hand. As the second brick peaks above the right hand, throw the third brick in your right hand in an arc towards the left hand, thus leaving the right hand free to catch.



# TWISTER

- Ask a group of children to bring their 6 bricks to the carpet or to an area big enough to complete gross motor movements, e.g. outside on grass or in play area.
- The teacher asks the children to drop their individual bricks in the area and to make sure that the bricks are spread out and not on top of each other.
- Children now stand around the bricks in a circle.
- Teacher gives instructions to the learners and they must move the different body parts.
  - Using your left foot, stand on a green brick.
  - Using your right foot, stand on a red brick.
  - Using your left hand, place it on a blue brick.
  - Using your right hand, place it on a yellow brick.
  - Now start with the left foot again and change the colour, e.g. move your left foot to a yellow brick.
- Continue with the game. When the child falls over or cannot reach a coloured brick then the child is out.



## ACTION ATTRACTION

- Work in pairs initially and then try working in groups of 3 or 4.
- The objective of the game is to develop a logical, short program of movements.
- Children assign an action to a brick - they can decide on this action together.
- Link this game to a pirate theme - design a treasure map with the bricks as clues to the treasure!

Example:

- |              |   |                               |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| • Green      | = | walk 10 steps forward         |
| • Red        | = | Stop                          |
| • Yellow     | = | Turn 90 degrees to your right |
| • Orange     | = | Turn 90 degrees to your left  |
| • Dark Blue  | = | Sit down                      |
| • Light Blue | = | Stand up                      |

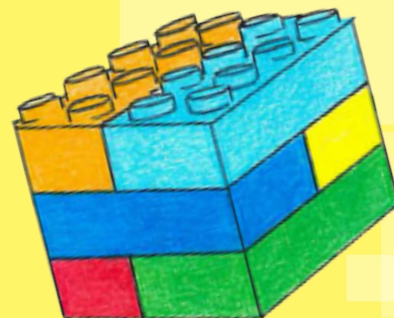




# CUBE COPY

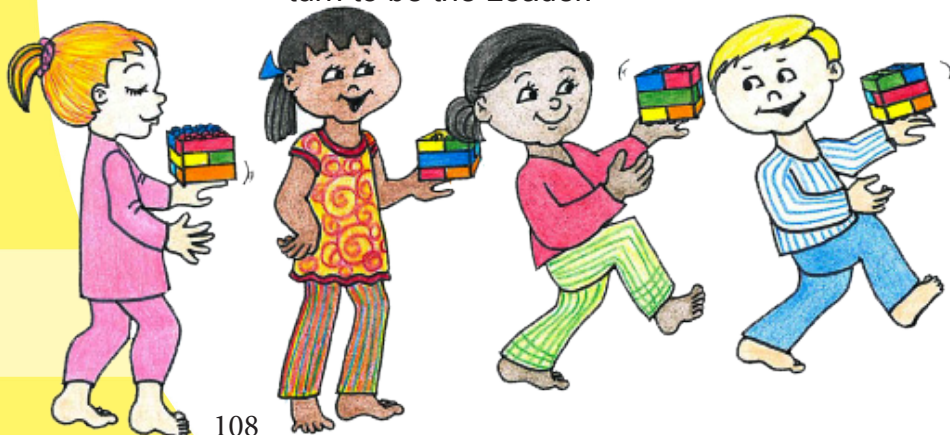


- Each child builds a cube with their 6 bricks.
- All bring your cube to a space (inside / outside the classroom), and make a large circle.
- Teacher starts off the activity by going into the middle of the circle, with her cube.
- Teacher performs an action with her cube, e.g. puts it on her head and turns around.
- Children see if they can copy that action.
- Teacher then chooses one of the children to go into the middle.
- That child then performs an action with the cube for the group to copy, then selects the next child for the middle.



## FOLLOW THE LEADER

- Each child builds a cube with their 6 bricks.
- Teacher starts moving around the classroom, with her cube, and invites the children to follow her, with their cube.
- Teacher keeps moving and performs actions with the cube.
- All children follow her and copy the actions.
- Teacher moves to the back of the line and the child who was behind Teacher now takes over as Leader.
- Continue in this way until all the children have had a turn to be the Leader.

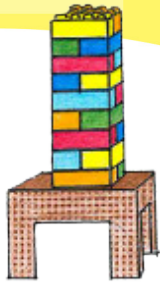




# CUBE BALANCE



- Divide the class into four teams.
- Each child builds their 6 bricks into a cube, and stands one behind the other, holding their own cube.
- When the race starts, the first in line places the cube on his head and moves across the room, balancing the cube on his head.
- When he reaches the end, he places the cube down and runs back to his team, touches the next in line and then that child does the same.
- When he gets to the end, he must add his cube to the one already there, connecting it.
- This process continues until all the children have had a turn, and they have built a tower of cubes.



# WALK THE ROPE

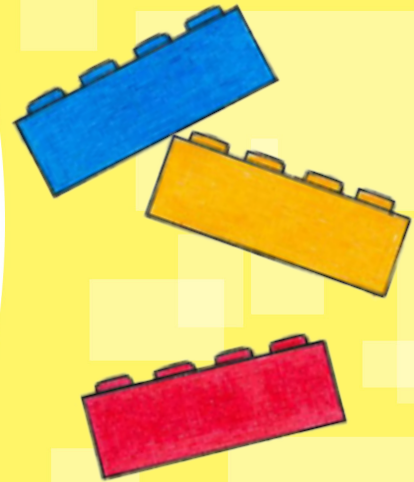
- Work in groups of 4. Use your bricks to build towers.
- Teacher places a rope on the floor in a curved line.
- Each child has one DUPLO brick, balanced on their head. They take turns to follow the curved line.
- Teacher places a DUPLO tower on the left and right sides of the rope.
- When a child reaches the tower, he / she must bend and pick up the tower to the left or right, using both hands.



# CUBE OBSTACLE HUNT



- Divide the class into four groups.
- Each group plots an obstacle course from one end of the classroom to the other, using desks, chairs, ropes, boxes, hoops etc. whatever the Teacher makes available.
- Each group hides a 6 brick cube at the end of the obstacle course.
- The Teacher then swops the groups so that they are not at the obstacle course that they built.
- Children work in pairs within their team - one of the pair is blindfolded.
- The blindfolded child is led through the obstacle course to the end, where his partner then describes to him where the cube is hidden and how to find it, through clues.
- As soon as the blindfolded child has his hands on the cube, they remove the blindfold and run back to their team, and the process starts again with the next two in line.
- The team to complete all their members first, is the winning team.



## CRAB WALK

- Children "walk" on all fours, with their back to the floor. Put a DUPLO brick on their tummy.

Q: *Can you move backwards / forwards / sideways to the left or to the right?*





# WHEELBARROW RACE



- Children work with a partner; have 6 bricks between the two.
- Child No. 1 must transport one brick at a time to the end of the classroom, by using Child No. 2 as a wheelbarrow.
- Offload the brick at the designated spot, then both children may run / skip / hop back to the starting point.
- Now they collect the next brick; this time Child No. 1 is the wheelbarrow and Child No. 2 walks, holding his feet, while the brick is balanced on his back.
- If the brick falls off, they stop, replace it and carry on.
- Continue in this way until all 6 bricks have been transported across.
- As soon as the last brick is at the end, the pair must build a cube.
- The first pair to complete the cube wins the race.

## Variations:

- Teacher could have a colour sequence to follow - children must transport their bricks in that colour sequence.
- The child "pushing" the wheelbarrow must cross his hands over.
- The pair stacks their bricks in the colour sequence at the end, instead of building a cube.



# SURVIVOR CHALLENGE

- Children work in pairs.
- Each pair builds their 6 bricks into a cube.
- No. 1 holds his / her arms out to the side, palms down and No. 2 places a cube on top of each hand.

Q: *Can you last for a minute?*

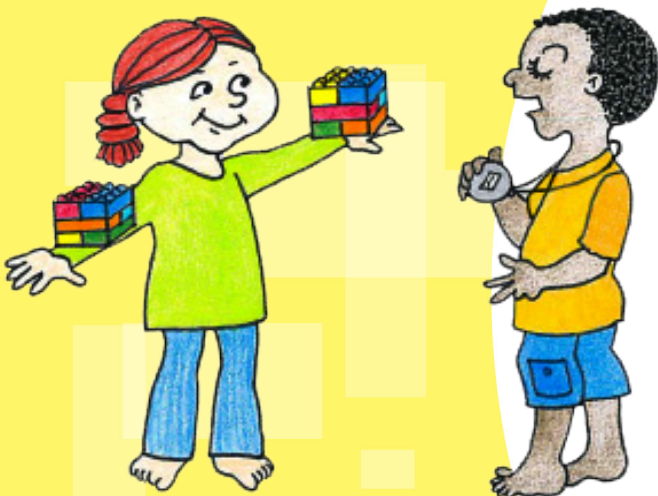
- Swop over so your partner also has a turn.

Q: *Who can last the longest?*

## Variations:

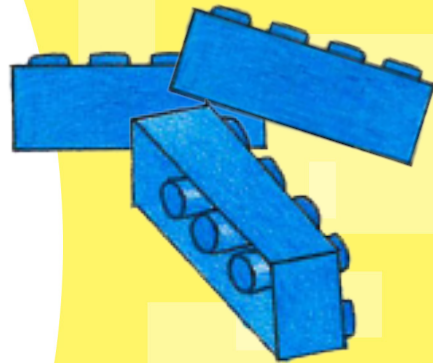
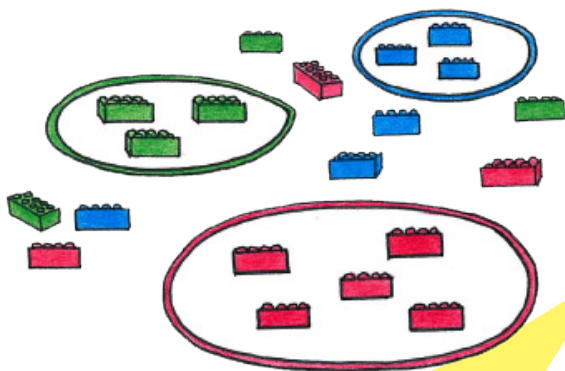
- Vary the game by placing the cube on different parts of the body.

Q: *Can you crouch down and balance it on your thighs?*



# INNIES & OUTIES

- Teacher places six hoops in spaces in the play area.
- There are two teams of children - Innies & Outies
- Each hoop is a different colour (same as the 6 bricks).
- In each hoop is a certain number of bricks of that colour; outside of each hoop is the same number of bricks randomly placed.
- When Teacher signals the game to start, the Innies move any of the bricks lying outside the hoops to the inside; the Outies move any of the bricks in the hoops to the outside of the hoops.
- Children may only move one brick at a time.
- After a certain length of time, Teacher signals the game to stop - children will count to see which team had the most bricks - Innies or Outies.
- That team wins the round. Play three rounds to determine a winner.



## BALLOON BASH

- Children work in twos / fours.
- They use their bricks to build a barrier / net between the tables.
- Each pair or team has a balloon between them.
- They must keep the balloon in the air and tap it from one to the other across the fence.

**Q:** *How many times can you hit the balloon across to each other?*

### Variations:

- Teams could play against each other and keep scores.
- Children could build a tower for the middle and the balloon must pass over the tower.



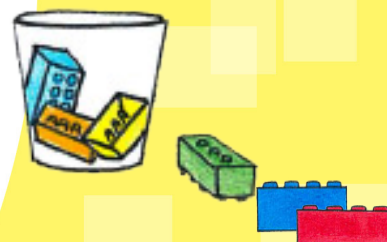
# BRICK-IN-A-BIN

- Children work in teams of 4 - 6, each holds their six bricks in a stack.
- They line up at a certain distance from the (empty) bin. (or a cardboard box)
- Children take turns to throw their bricks, one at a time, into the bin.
- They can keep score of how many they get in the bin.
- When the whole team has had their turn, they tally all the bricks in the bin to determine the winning team.

## Variations:

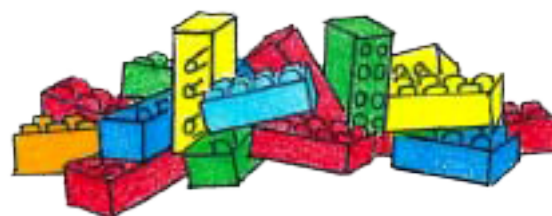
- Teams can come up with some of their own ideas on scoring for this game.
- Teacher could have six bins, each a colour of one of the six bricks.
- Children have to move around to throw their bricks into the correct colour target.

*Q: Which team can be finished first?*



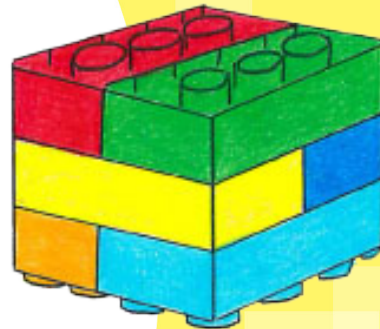
# HIDE AND GO SEEK

- Children form teams of six. They play with one cube of six bricks, made up in one colour.
- Each group of six has a different colour cube.
- One child in each group hides their cube and tells the rest in the team when they can go and look for it.
- That child can tell their teammates whether they are "hot" or "cold" in their search for the cube.
- Once the cube is found, another child from the group becomes the one to hide the cube.



# CHINNY CHIN CHIN

- Each child makes a cube with their 6 bricks.
- Stand in a circle and place the cubes in the middle; work with only one cube.
- Leader starts off and places the cube under his / her chin.
- See if you can pass the cube to the next chin in the circle. Cube is passed from chin to chin.



## LET'S TWIST AGAIN

- Work in groups of 6.
- Each child makes a cube with their 6 bricks. Stand in a circle; place all the cubes in the middle.
- Leader has one cube in his / her hand.
- All children turn to face the right; Leader passes the cube by twisting his / her body, who then passes the cube by twisting in the opposite direction, etc. until the cube gets back to the Leader.
- See which team wins!

