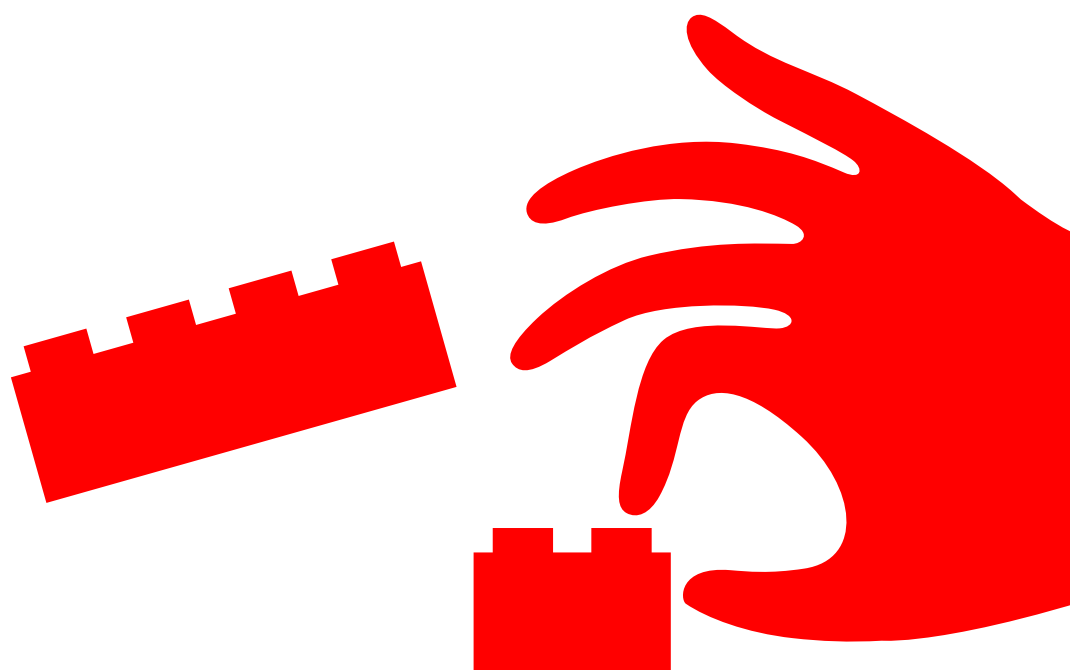


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# Brick-by-Brick<sup>®</sup>: building relationships through a love of LEGO<sup>®</sup> in New Zealand

Andie Pirie is Deputy Principal, SENCO, at Point View School, a mainstream primary school in Auckland, New Zealand for students aged five to 11 years old.

When Andie learned about the Brick-by-Brick<sup>®</sup> programme, she recognised that the opportunity to play with LEGO<sup>®</sup> bricks would motivate her students to want to take part in Brick Club:

*“Having used LEGO sets in my classroom over the years, I knew this would be a tool that would hook children in.”*

One of the benefits of the Brick-by-Brick<sup>®</sup> programme is the fact that LEGO bricks are a methodical and predictable construction system that can appeal to children – particularly neurodivergent children: “The programme stood out for having both a structured component, and a freeform component as the children move into free building.”

Andie notes that structure and organisation is important to her as well: “The step-by-step approach of the programme also appealed to me. I am very organised and just loved getting the sets, the roles and other equipment set up!”

## Training and implementation

Having read about the Brick-by-Brick<sup>®</sup> programme and been inspired by its potential to support children with additional needs, Andie completed Play Included<sup>®</sup>'s Level 01 Initiate training with the hope that she would be able to deliver her own Brick Clubs at Point View School.

She found it particularly useful being able to watch her trainer deliver multiple sessions with children and

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drew inspiration from these sessions for her own club. Following the training, Andie felt able to “dive right in” and set up a Brick Club for her students aged seven and eight years old.

While the Brick-by-Brick® programme may be particularly helpful to support the social and emotional development of autistic children, all children can benefit from Brick Club and Andie welcomed both neurodivergent and neurotypical students to take part in her sessions. By working with class teachers, she identified students who would benefit from the opportunity to play together in small groups.

## Generalising skills

While running the Brick Club, Andie saw improvements in the children’s ability to generalise the skills they developed during sessions outside of the club, noting:

*“I was most impressed with the way that social interactions carry on back in the classroom, not just at Brick Club.”*



# Brick Club

The popularity of Brick Club with students and parents alike was immediate and Andie notes that

*“the initial reaction was one of envy from the children who weren’t in the first club. I even had parents emailing me to see if their child could be included and the teachers and teacher’s aides were all very positive about it.”*

## Future plans

The Brick Club has been so well received by students and their parents that Andie plans to expand the sessions to include other age groups outside of the seven and eight year olds who she currently works with: “My plan is to keep as many groups going and maintain this for as long as possible!”

Play Included’s Brick-by-Brick® programme Level 01 Initiate training is available in New Zealand and education and healthcare professionals, including teachers, SENCOs, educational psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and more, can register for the online training here:

<https://playincluded.com/training-programmes>