



Sensory ICT Glow Construction Blocks (EY06793)

In this case study, Hazel, Early Years Teacher at Brampton Primary School, explains how the Sensory Glow Construction Blocks have been used in their Early Years setting and discusses the impact they have had on learning.



Background Information

Our school is a fairly large primary school situated near Chesterfield town centre. In addition to our mainstream pupils, we have an enhanced resource for children with autism. We also have a number of other children in school with additional needs, meaning the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average. A number of these pupils have sensory needs, so we were keen to purchase the Glow Construction Blocks as both part of our SEN and EYFS provision.

As part of the provision for our children with SEN, we regularly complete sensory audits. These audits highlight the sensory needs for each child. A large number of our children are visually sensory seeking - meaning they seek out bright or flashing lights and enjoy playing with torches or other light sources. We were also keen to further develop continuous provision within our EYFS Unit. The children in our setting are developing their block play skills and we felt this resource would really enrich their imaginative play and problem-solving skills within the construction area.

How were the Sensory ICT Glow Construction Cubes used?

Firstly, we introduced the resource to our EYFS children as part of an enhancement to our construction area. The children were fascinated by the coloured cubes and even more engaged when they realised the resource changed colour when the cubes were placed on their different faces. The children began by building towers and knocking them down. They then tried to create buildings using only one colour or patterns of colour. This really supported their problem-solving and teamwork skills. Children were also encouraged to use a variety of small world equipment within their play with the block cubes. This included small world people and animals. The children particularly enjoyed creating a habitat for the arctic animals. They quickly extended this play by including some small plastic ice cubes we have in our setting and some shiny fabric to create a narrative around the arctic animals. During this play, it was clear to see that the children were fully engaged in both their building and the resulting story telling which enabled them to further develop their communication and language skills.

We also used the resource within EYFS to support the teaching of prepositions during one of our Maths units. We created a tuff spot tray of the cubes in a variety of colours. Children were encouraged to put their 'mini me's' (small full body photos attached to Duplo cubes) in different positions in the tray. E.g. can you put yourself next to the blue cube or behind the yellow cube? etc. Children were then asked to describe where the 'mini me's' were. The use of prepositions is also a speech therapy target for a variety of our children, so this was a really useful activity for focused intervention time.

Following the success of the resource within continuous provision in EYFS, we introduced them to our SEN pupils who are visually sensory seeking. We have a dark tent within our enhanced resource for children with ASD. The blocks were placed inside and children were encouraged to explore the changing lights. In the dark area of the tent, the light from the cubes appeared to be much brighter. Again, the children were fascinated by the changing colours. The light appeared to help some children to become more regulated and ready to learn. Many of our children are also tactile sensory seeking and use their mouths to explore the environment. As these blocks are suitable from birth and the batteries are not accessible to the children, we were able to feel reassured that we could let them explore them independently.

Within our setting, the resource was mainly used inside the classrooms and in our enhanced resource area. On a dry day, the cubes could be used outside but the glow from the cubes is more visible in darker areas so this resource appears to have more impact when used inside. However, our EYFS children did make the suggestion that we should build a den in our outdoor area and take the cubes inside to light it up so that is definitely the next project for outdoor provision!

Impact and outcomes

The blocks really enhanced our construction provision. The light up nature of the resource definitely increased the children's engagement in the building activities and sparked their imaginations to create a range of exciting and creative models. The buildings they created seemed to have a magical feel. It would be particularly beneficial to use the resource when teaching about festivals e.g. Diwali or Christmas to support storytelling and small world play.

We saw a particular impact in our setting for those children with additional needs. The glow of the blocks and the ability to change the light colour by moving them was really calming for those children who are sensory seeking. Time spent with the cubes in the dark space helped many of our children become less dysregulated and ready to access time within mainstream classes.



With thanks to Hazel from Brampton Primary School for writing and sharing this case study with us.



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Find out how the staff at Shotley Kids Zone used the Sensory Glow Construction Blocks with children of different ages to support their learning.



Background Information

The light up construction bricks have been used within our room called the Caterpillar Room, which also incorporates breakfast club and afterschool club with ages ranging from twelve months to eleven years. As a setting we have children with additional needs and young in age so we felt these light up construction blocks would support so many areas of the children's development and also give them opportunities to extend their own learning by finding new ways to use the bricks. We hoped that the light up construction blocks would promote physical, sensory and communication development.

First Impressions and Learning Opportunities

The light up construction blocks were a fantastic resource and helped the children's communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development within the setting. The light up construction blocks supported the children with gross motor skills, emotions and speech development. We used the sensory light blocks within the baby area as a base, but these were transported into all areas within the room. While being used with the twelve-month-olds to four years olds, the construction blocks supported so many areas of their development and gave them opportunities to discuss colours, shapes, size and emotions.

The children have really appreciated using the construction blocks in the Caterpillar room in group scenarios and also individually. When first introduced, the children were very inquisitive to be exploring something new. The children were able to listen and watch a demonstration given to them of how they worked and then had a go for themselves. The children have found the construction glow blocks easier to use the more they have played with them, sometimes needing some support with understanding of how to turn the blocks around to change the colour of the lights.

The children have been able to explore the blocks independently and show satisfaction in meeting their goals of building towers and changing the colours.

We have made the decision to use the sensory light blocks inside to prevent them from getting lost and damaged although they could be used outdoors with adult support or perhaps in warmer, dry weather. The changing in colour has been a great idea as when we have the afterschool children aged five to eleven this has given them opportunities to talk about emotions and feelings associated with the change in colours. The older children also supported the younger children with their colour knowledge as this gave them opportunities to talk and explore alongside them.

The older children used the bricks to tell spooky stories to each other, holding the bricks under their chin to make their face change colour.

Supporting children with SEN

We have a child in the setting with additional needs and the blocks supported sensory exploration giving the child opportunities to respond to the change in colours using his sounds.

We thought the light up blocks were a positive addition to the Caterpillar room and have been used with a range of children aged from twelve months right through to eleven. The blocks can be used in so many different ways and promote so many areas of development.

When reflecting on this resource as a team we feel they have had a positive impact within the setting and have been used by a wide age range of children in many different areas of their development. The positives of the construction light up blocks have brought the children's development out in different ways.



With thanks to Shotley Kids Zone for writing and sharing this case study with us.