

Do you like what I made?

By Carme Roca

A 2-year-old child is capable of understanding more than it can express verbally, so playing is the way it explores the world. A good way to start this project is to favour fine motor skills with building blocks. From about 1 year old, a child can build towers, stacking pieces, and create different colour combinations, even fit pieces in place.

So.... once upon a time, thanks to a collaboration agreement with LEGO® Iberia, some DUPLO pieces arrived at school and the children had the opportunity of building, creating and discovering many ways to play!!!

With the children of the group of 1-year-old born at the beginning of the year (almost 2 years old), LAS GRANOTAS, we started with a first contact with the DUPLO animals. We emptied out two boxes of the 6784 set on each table (no chairs). The happy faces and the surprise were the best part. Some started building, other classifying by colour and choosing pieces of the same colour as their starting block,... Concentration, pride in recognising what they are doing, smiles, expressions, ability to walk around to look for the pieces they want, others ask for help... Later sessions we did on the floor: MUCH BETTER!!!

The children in the class of 1-year-old born at the end of the year (those that had just turned 1), LAS TORTUGAS, started just like the first group. First they experimented, some threw pieces on the floor to find out what it sounded like. Later, the educators introduced the templates with animal shapes in order to complete them. They did the game and the children copied. They would take a pieces and the children would take a similar one. They children understood there was an empty spot in the template and they fitted the piece in correctly. In a second sessions they were more concentrated because they knew what they were going to do. Even so, they threw some pieces on the floor, but picked them up immediately.

They tried to put the pieces on the templates, trying to match both shape and colour, stacking pieces to build towers and they tidied up all the pieces one by one: BRAVO!!!!!!!

In the class of 2-year-olds, LOS PINGÜINOS, we were working around a city theme and in order to learn by playing we placed the city theme blocks in 4 containers. At each table there were 4-5 children.

We let them experiment, first, and as expected, they surprised us. Some made cars with or without wheels, others houses. Some looked at the models to get ideas from the images and others built towers fitting pieces together... and all were proud of their creations, while respecting the quiet environment and their classmates. Some have even built a landscape and shared in symbolic play. The interesting thing is that it was a free activity that was not at any time coordinated by an adult and without a marked objective.

In each session, when the kids started to lose interest we asked them to put away the pieces in the corresponding container or box, loose, so that play could be resumed on the next day. Some children kept strict watch that all bricks were loose and there was no conflict regarding this.

In the next session they were very participative and with the same attitude as in the previous session and we decided to do an exhibition with their creations. WHAT A SUCCESS!!!!!!

All of this is just a sample of what the children of between 1 and 2 years old at Llar d'Infants el Timbalet have been able to do. The only thing we can't share is what we as educators experienced first hand: their expressions, their faces, their silence and shared playtime.

Playing with DUPLO has been a pedagogical experience





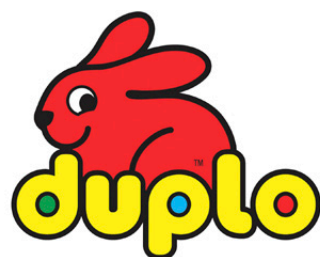
and an aid in our City project. The children have been able to express and reason about where they live and have created houses, a garden, a truck, cars, a tower... There has been a positive language development since, without any prompting, they have started to name the pieces they were using, by shape, colour and by what they were creating. In the first sessions the silence could be felt, as the children were focussed on learning, curious to know more and get to it without losing time. Each day full advantage was taken of the proposed activities and the children carried them out with great interest. They would occasionally ask the educators for help, who in turn observed the attentively. In addition, they have developed good social relationships with the other children in

the class, because they have shared the pieces, handing them to their classmates, and have interacted playing with what they created.

To value all they have been doing we did an exhibition at the entrance of the class so their parents could see and share with their children all the things learned in class with DUPLO blocks. Most of them were impressed!!!!!!

We never had any doubts about what we would learn with them. It has been a surprise!

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