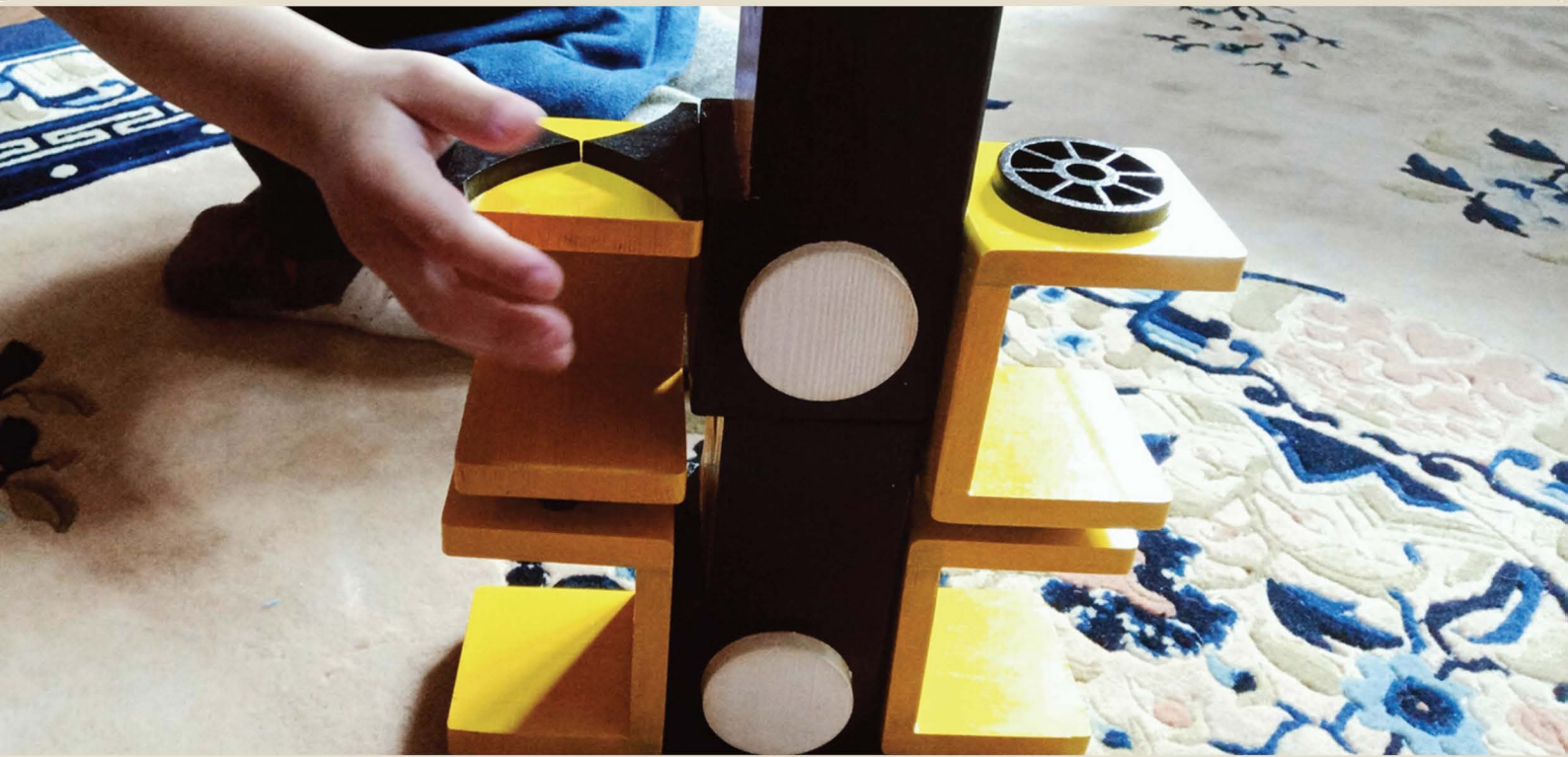




# Learning through play with Bhutan Blocks



# Bhutan Blocks

**Bhutan Blocks** are designed with bold contrasting colours and motifs that celebrate the patterns and symbols of Bhutan. The clever interlocking system keeps the blocks stable in play and builds curiosity about traditional forms of construction. The motifs are made tactile allowing children with visual impairment to appreciate the symbols and structures of their land.

Block play helps develop fundamental skills in early childhood. It gives children a hands - on experience of science and math. As they manipulate blocks they experience balance, stability, size and distance. Bhutan blocks draw from the unique architecture in Bhutan to introduce children to their rich cultural heritage.

**Physical development:** Children develop fine motor skills, strength and hand eye coordination as they reach, lift and create structures with the blocks.

**Cognitive development:** Children develop spatial reasoning skills, problem solving skills, and concepts in mathematics and science.

**Cultural development:** Children will become more aware of their environment and learn to appreciate traditional skills and arts.

**Emotional and Social development:** Playing together to build something with blocks helps children develop important skills like negotiation, taking turns, becoming a leader and cooperating in a group.

**Language and communication development:** Play with blocks involves lots of action and direction words. Bhutan Blocks provide a unique opportunity to learn words related to the symbols, their description and their meaning.

**Creativity and imagination skills:** The unique design of the Bhutan Blocks allow children to experiment with different possibilities in construction like interleaving blocks or building upward and sideways to create their own designs.



**How can block play develop skills across a curriculum? Let's take a look at the activity ECCD children found one morning when they entered their classroom.**

## **let's decorate our window!**

The facilitators had placed all the blocks out on the floor. They asked each child:

**Now many blocks will you need?**

Children could answer, point to a number, or pick out the number of blocks they thought they would need.

After this they all placed blocks against the window and agreed on how many each would use. Now, the facilitators told each child:

**Design a window in your own way!**

Some children drew, others experimented with the blocks. Each one got to present their work to their friends. How proud they felt!

**Can you tell me what I did well?**

Everyone said one thing they liked about each design presented.

Children could speak, point to what they liked, or give their friends a star!



## Learning beyond school

A very nice feature of the Bhutan Blocks is the tactile symbols. These patterns are found easily in the environment. Children can each pick their favourite shape and count how many times they see it in buildings around them. They can design patterns for a window at their home. The possibilities are endless!

## Design play for everyone

Isn't it lovely how this fun activity works across all domains of development? When children have delays in one area of development, they are often left out of activities, impacting opportunities in many other domains. When we give children choices in how they participate in an activity, we allow learning to continue. After all, for example, all children can demonstrate their creativity and imagination whether they pick and place blocks or draw shapes.

**Are blocks only for little children?  
Can they play a role in primary school?  
Let's see how some teachers planned a  
class using action centers.**

## Three Activity Centres

Use the blocks on the table to design  
ANYTHING you want. One child made a lady  
wearing a fancy clip and a flower in her hair!



### Art & English/ Dzongkha

Look up images of houses in the different  
Dzongkhags of Bhutan. Do you see how  
differently they are built? Are some symbols  
used more in one place than in the other?  
What do the designs mean?



### Geography, English & ICT

Work as a team and see how high you can  
build while keeping the structure stable!  
How many blocks did you use? How much  
higher do you think you could go if you had  
more blocks?



### Math & Science, HPE, Dzongkha & Rigzhum

**present your project to your class!**





Play provides the top three ingredients that help develop healthy, active minds:

interacting with other people,  
manipulating the physical environment and  
engaging in creative problem solving.

The deepest learning happens when children are happy, engaged and motivated. As they problem solve, collaborate and create solutions, children develop fundamental skills that build life-long learners.

All it takes is access to the right facilitation with thoughtfully designed materials!

