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## Not your typical classroom

stablished in 2001, LEGO® Education Centers can be found in several countries around the world including Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Australia, and most recently the United States.

Designed to provide after-school activities that supplement the traditional learning environment, LEGO Education Centers offer a friendly environment with lots of open space where children can have fun while building skills like creativity and problem solving.

Mimicking today's educational system, Center courses are offered by age level. Each course is divided into four 12-week units, which, completed consecutively, equal a full year's worth of curriculum. Each unit is facilitated by qualified Center staff and limited to a small number of participants. The goal is to keep the group size modest so each child can excel at his or her own pace and not get lost in the crowd.

Each 12-week unit focuses on a different theme related to the course title. Children meet weekly to explore various aspects of the theme, using tailor-made educational LEGO sets. By using LEGO sets to build and design solutions, curriculum-based skills such as mathematics, science, and technology are taken to a higher level.

## Hands-on education

A unique component to Center activities is the opportunity for children to work with their hands. Hands-on learning is the core of LEGO Education. By using their hands, children are

able to easily connect with a problem and utilize cognitive thinking skills to find various solutions. Through this hands-on approach, every child is required to test their own ideas

and discover what works or what doesn't work for their specific situation.

Younger children are given LEGO bricks and sets to create structures that reflect their imagination, while older children are challenged to complete missions using LEGO



LEGO® Education Center Instructor Carolyn Finch works with a child in a play area. Each child is encouraged to work at his or her own speed and skill level.

robotics. Each child is encouraged to work at his or her own speed and skill level, essentially creating an environment where the child is not judged on his or her abilities but is given the necessary support to enhance his or her understanding of the problem and how to create a solution.

## **Essential skills**

Children enrolled in Center courses learn seven essential skills: communication, concentration and perseverance, socialization, planning and organizing, design, creative problem solving, and independent-thinking skills.

They are taught how to cooperate with others, express their opinions, challenge themselves, and celebrate their uniqueness. Activities that are based on construction and problem solving allow children to learn not only by listening, reading, and writing but also by using their body and spatial intelligence.

Today, thanks to the programs and staff at LEGO Education Centers worldwide, children are exposed to playful learning that will impact their future development and strengthen their educational journey. ■

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