

Urbana School District 116

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urbana School District Looking for New or Used Building Blocks Donations *District 116 Implementing New Techniques for Students with Special Needs*

Urbana School District teachers and social workers are using Lego blocks to help elementary students in the District's Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities Program. The EBD Program is for students who have trouble functioning in a normal classroom setting. The elementary students attend Yankee Ridge where there is a special wing set up to accommodate their unique needs. There are currently nine students in the EBD Program.

Yankee Ridge Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities Consultant Kay Jamieson says students will be using Lego blocks in order to build academic and social skills through play. "We are attempting to set up a learning area that is both positive affectively and beneficial to them academically. The purpose is to provide ways for the student to learn to have control in the expression of their behaviors in positive and productive ways," Jamieson explains.

Yankee Ridge Social Worker Laura Haber says, "Sometimes our students need the expressive arts to help themselves bridge communication with images instead of words. When in an anxious state, complex cognitive functioning shuts down and that includes ability to speak words. The use of images helps to lower the frustration level and increases self-awareness and understanding. Images help to access the words that give meaning and organize the child's world again."

The public can help contribute to this program's success by donating Legos. Haber says the EBD Program is always looking for Lego blocks. She says, "Most of our students haven't had the luxury of working with Legos because they are expensive. But some people I know have too many and don't know what to do with them all. But they don't want to throw them away because they are too expensive! This idea can be a win-win! Give us your used unwanted Legos ---we really need them!"

Those wishing to donate new or used Legos to the Urbana School District's EBD Program or media wishing to do a story about the EBD program, please contact Haber at Yankee Ridge Elementary School at 384-3608.

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