

Building Our Neighborhood: A Lego Geography Adventure

This lesson uses a preschooler's love for Legos to explore basic geography concepts like community places and simple maps.

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

1. **Talk About Our Neighborhood:** Start by asking your child about your own neighborhood. "What buildings do we see when we go for a walk?" (Houses, stores, library, park, school, etc.). Point out different places on your next outing.
2. **What is a Map?:** Briefly explain that a map is like a picture that shows us where things are. Show a very simple map if you have one (like a park map or a hand-drawn map of your house).

Activity: Lego Neighborhood Construction (15-20 minutes)

1. **Gather Materials:** Bring out the Lego bricks and the large sheet of paper (this will be our map base).
2. **Build Together:** "Let's build some places in our neighborhood using Legos!" Start by building a house. Ask your child what else should be in the neighborhood. Guide them to build 2-3 other simple structures like a store (maybe with a flat roof), a park (maybe with green bricks and a simple tree), or a school. Keep the builds simple and recognizable.
3. **Place the Buildings:** As each building is finished, place it onto the large sheet of paper. Ask your child where they want to put it.

Activity: Making Our Map (10-15 minutes)

1. **Connecting the Places:** "How do we get from the house to the store? We need roads!" Use crayons or markers to draw simple roads connecting the Lego buildings on the paper map.
2. **Labeling (Optional):** For older preschoolers, you can help them write a simple label (H for House, S for Store, P for Park) next to each building.
3. **Spatial Talk:** Use position words. "Where is the park? It's *next to* the house." "The store is *across from* the park." Encourage your child to use these words too. Place toy figures or cars on the map and ask, "Where is the car driving?"

Wrap-up and Assessment (5 minutes)

1. **Neighborhood Tour:** Have your child give a 'tour' of the Lego neighborhood they created, pointing out the different buildings and describing where they are located using the map.
2. **Review:** Ask simple questions: "What did we build today?" "What does a map show us?" "Can you show me the house on our map?"
3. **Clean-up:** Work together to put the Legos away, reinforcing the names of the buildings one last time.

Extension Ideas:

- Read books about neighborhoods or maps.
- Take a walk and identify the buildings you built.
- Add more details to the Lego neighborhood over several days (more houses, different types of stores, community helpers like firefighters/police).