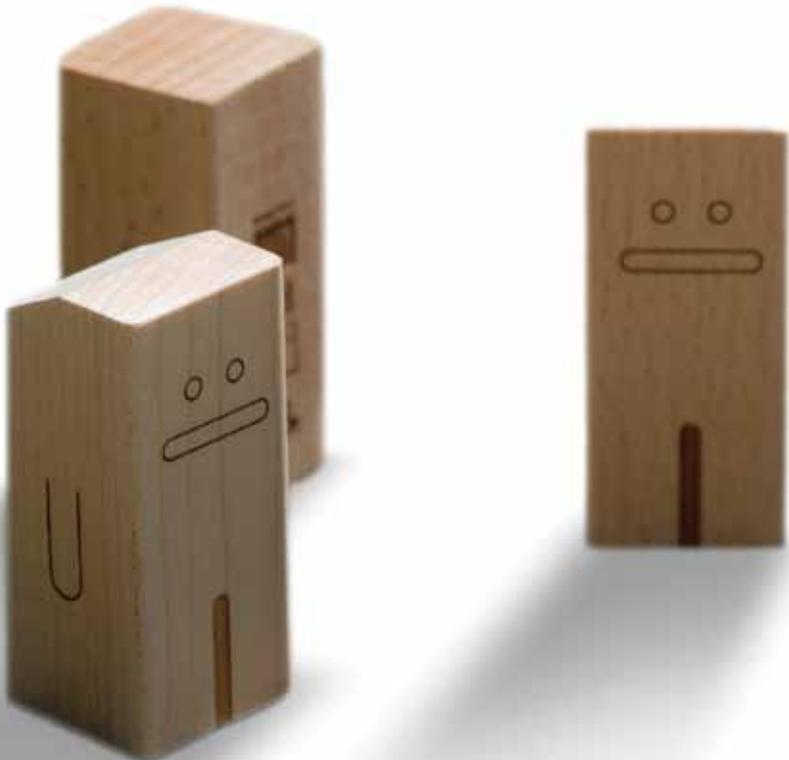# Place People

Bringing to life a sense of how and where we belong:
in relationships, in giving and receiving, in time and in
our own space

'Where are you?'

'I am here!'

Where is our right place?

Place People uses lovingly made figures to enable children, parents and teachers to create visible, tactile models of human systems. Children and adults develop a sense of their 'right place' in groups and communities, as well as gain insight into where they can respond more creatively to life together.

'What became clear from this mapping work was that there had been a powerful hidden issue at play.'

Jude Austin, Teaching Assistant

Testing out a decision

A Year 4 class were having problems choosing who their two representatives should be for the school council. The class was made up of small strong friendship groups who each wanted their chosen candidate to represent the class. The teacher used **Place People** to explore the dynamics within small groups of pupils and discover who were the best-placed children to represent the ideas and feelings of the whole class, and not simply their own friendship group. Two very unexpected candidates emerged, who turned out to be excellent ambassadors for the class.

In response to conflict and disagreement

A group of Year 5 girls in a small rural primary school were not getting on. There was some bullying, but it was difficult to ascertain who was doing what to whom. The mothers of the girls were also distressed and beginning to fall out over the issue. The head teacher and senior teaching assistant used two sets of **Place People** to work with the mothers and the girls separately one afternoon after school to explore the dynamics of both groups and their perceptions regarding each other. The two groups then came together to discuss the situation and spoke frankly and honestly to each other. The mothers welcomed the opportunity to explore and acknowledge each other's concerns and felt that the **Place People** gave a structure and honesty, which would not otherwise have been present.

Learning Tools – Place People

We, as human beings, are constantly interacting with our social world, making sense of our relationships with groups and individuals. These connections enable children and young people to build their self-identities and motivations, and establish the all-important relationships with the people who can support their learning and growth.

Co-created by **ecl** practitioners, parents and teachers, our set of nine wooden place people are used to help children explore and gain a better understanding of their relationships by making a physical and visual representation of a family, learning or friendship group.

Quite naturally, children use objects or representational toys to make sense of their worlds. They 'act out' or rehearse conversations and situations. Our **Place People** take this activity a step further by providing a simple means to explore the often hidden dynamics in the interactions they have with each other, adults and experiences. Their use in the classroom has brought clarity and understanding to a range of challenging circumstances and issues, stimulating discussion about the wider forces influencing situations – and pointing the way to resolution.

The set of nine wooden people blocks – four male figures, four female figures and one neutral figure are beautifully crafted and pre-printed, each approx 6.5 x 3cm. A circular fabric mat (48 cm diameter) is included, as are a heavy canvas storage bag and a comprehensive 28-page booklet with a detailed and step-by-step guide for the teacher or assistant, full of ideas, real-life examples and ways to work.

For school, individual or group use from four years old onwards with adult assistance.

Price £20 (ex VAT and p&p).

To learn more about **Place People**
email us at chris.charles@**ecl**foundation.org

To learn more about **ecl**'s work and other learning tools
visit www.**ecl**foundation.org