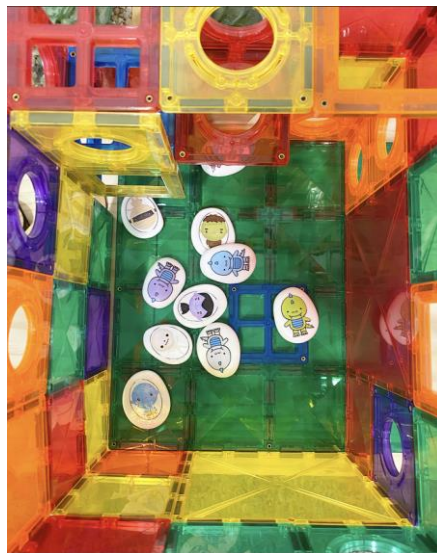


7 days Invitation to PLAY Challenge

A 7-day challenge focusing on **Invitations to PLAY** – from the theory to the everyday practicality of setting up an *invitation to play* with confidence, ease, and minimal time.

Join this challenge with your friends and the other community members and be prepared to share your set ups so that we can celebrate your wins together!



TERMS & CONDITIONS

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7 days invitation to play challenge

Pre-task

As it is when taking on any new project, it is important to know what you are starting with. To kick start our 7-day invitations to play project, *make a list of all the play resources found within your home.* This will provide you with an ideal starting point by refreshing your memory with what you have, what you don't have, what you need, what you want and of course what resources you have to work with. Next *highlight the resources that immediately come to mind as lending themselves to themes.* And finally *jot the theme ideas down next to play resources for future reference.*

Print out our Inventory free printable to help get you started (see below).

Come and share your list in the Project PLAY Membership group.

Keep scrolling for Days 2-7 lessons.

What is an 'invitation to play'? *'Invitation to play'* is a term often used in the Early Childhood setting. It is inspired by the Reggio Emilio approach to teaching and learning. An **'invitation to play'** is the intentional arrangement of a play space/activity so that it "invites" young learners to interact, engage, explore, manipulate materials through independent play.

What should an 'invitation to play' include?

An 'invitation to play' should include open ended and age-appropriate materials that aim to keep children engaged in their learning. It should capture their attention, be designed with intention, and include materials that can be touched and used in an imaginative way. Materials can include small or large toys, loose pieces, figurines, and accessories.

What are the benefits of creating 'invitations to play'?

There are a multitude of benefits to creating 'invitations to play' in your home or classroom from a learning perspective to an organisational perspective.

Children can engage in:

- sensory exploration
- creative thinking
- vocabulary building
- co-operative play
- imaginative play
- gross and fine motor development and
- play utilising a wide range of materials within the home/classroom

What should I consider when creating an 'invitation to play'?

When creating an 'invitation to play' things to consider are:

- are there enough resources to cater for all children to participate
- how the children might use the materials
- can the children move freely with the materials
- what learning/play do I want the children to develop or build upon
- is the play space well organised to allow for easy movement

How to create a MESSY PLAY Invitation

PLAY Idea #1

Messy Spaghetti

This is a messy activity but one that can be cleaned up relatively quickly when set up in a way that allows for that. Be sure to check out our MESSY PLAY TIPS before you start...in our FB group!



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HOW TO MAKE MESSY SPAGHETTI

1. Cook spaghetti al dente in a pot of boiling water.
2. Drain spaghetti
3. Put into a snaplock bag with a few drops of food colouring
4. Shake until desired colour is reached.
5. Add some oil to help spaghetti not become sticky.
6. Happy PLAYing!!

PLAY IDEAS REQUIRE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES!!

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MESSY PLAY TIP

Try to have an *exit strategy* or *plan b* when setting up a messy play learning experience.

This means, a full proof way to stop what isn't working in the messy play and the necessary idea/resources ready to begin a new activity to avoid disaster with the messy play.

Reasons why you may need an exit strategy:

- The wrong kind of mess
- Damage
- Sudden change of weather

The exit strategy/Plan B could be as simple as:

- a familiar, on the spot go-to play activity eg. Simon Says or Follow the Leader
- a backup play experience set up ready to begin when the messy play doesn't quite work out
- a tuff, tablecloth, paint drop sheet, wet ones, paper towel nearby
- a Plan B tub filled with a ready to go fun activity.

This tip can be used with any messy PLAY learning experience!!

How to create a NATURE/SENSORY PLAY Invitation

PLAY Idea #2

Floral Icy Sun Catchers

A simple sensory activity to set up using natural items collected from a yard and/or nature walk with water in containers for freezing.



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HOW TO MAKE FLORAL ICY SUN CATCHERS

1. Fill one glass bowl per learner with water.
2. Sprinkle the water with petals, leaves and stems. Add a looped piece of twine to one edge for it to become the hanger.
3. Freeze until solid.
4. Remove from the freezer.
5. Use spray bottles or droppers with warm water.
6. Place frozen bowls in a tray of warm water.
7. Use spray bottles or droppers to help loosen the ice mass from the bowl. Do not melt completely and avoid the twine section.
8. Hang up and watch the sun melt the ice away.

PLAY IDEAS REQUIRE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES!!

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How to create a NATURE/SENSORY PLAY Invitation

PLAY Idea #3

Lemon Water Play Tray

A simple sensory learning experience that can be used with a variety of fruits, herbs and plants. Add a set of scoops and containers for some scoop and pour action.



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HOW TO MAKE LEMON WATER PLAY TRAY

1. Cut lemons into thin slices.
2. Fill a tray with a shallow amount of water.
3. Place lemon slices into the water.

OPTIONAL - add some rose petals or scoops for an added element of fun.

Happy PLAYing!!

PLAY IDEAS REQUIRE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES!!

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How to create a SENSORY/SMALL WORLD PLAY Invitation

PLAY Idea #4

Playdough Trays

Playdough trays paired with a range of books and fine motor tools will have you set with your little ones for a bundle of precious moments.



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HOW TO MAKE A PLAYDOUGH TRAY

1. Make or buy playdough and place into the base of the tray.
2. Add landscape and/or animal figurines to the tray in an authentic way...creating a scene either from a familiar experience or book.
3. You can add other loose pieces or fine motor tools to create a multisensory learning experience.

Happy PLAYing!!

PLAY IDEAS REQUIRE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES!!

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How to create a NATURE/SENSORY PLAY Invitation

PLAY Idea #5

Flower Petal Playdough

Another simple and beautiful sensory activity that can use the leftover natural items from the previous activity, along with playdough and accessories.



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HOW TO MAKE A FLOWER PETAL PLAYDOUGH

1. Make playdough - we use the cream of tartar recipe with no food colouring so we get white playdough.
2. Add natural loose pieces to the tray in an inviting way...colour matching or following textural patterns.
3. Add some fine motor playdough tools to extend the learning experience.
4. Watch your learners create floral playdough.

Happy PLAYing!!

PLAY IDEAS REQUIRE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES!!

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Creating an **'Invitation to play'** doesn't need to be fancy or done with new materials all the time. The key is to use what you already have and present the materials in different ways to encourage learning. The **'Invitation to play'** needs to be appealing, challenging and open ended. This can be achieved using colour, the element of surprise, making it real/authenticity, making it creative and fun.

Remember the *pre task* from Day 1-

Today you will need to refer to it because it is time to create a *plan of action* for you to embrace moving forward beyond this weekly challenge.

1. Choose one of your themes and collect the materials needed.
2. Visualise a scene that depicts the chosen theme. Eg if you have chosen Farm as the theme, you might visualise a barn with a paddock filled with farm animals or animals drinking from a dam.
3. Using the materials you have, place them in an interesting and inviting way. This might be in a divider container separating the materials into categories or a farm scene partially created that will allow children to continue the play with their ideas or the set the invitation up in a different location to the usual play space.
4. You may choose to set up more than one 'invitation to play' and if so, you can repeat this process. That pre task list you have made will be your best friend so pop it up in a safe place for future reference eg. Command centre, play planner, noticeboard.

Don't forget to join the [7 Days Invitation to PLAY Challenge group](#) to see what others have done in the past and to be in the next round when it begins.