

Planning for PLAY

Hello and welcome to the first of many mini lessons... the place where you can learn more about PLAY Based Learning at home in a way that fits your life and will see you planning for PLAY with greater intention.

In this series of mini lessons (4 lessons) you will:

- Discover and establish realistic pockets of PLAY
- Learn about schedule blocking and how it can work for you
 - Set PLAY goals
- Create a plan for PLAY either using our template in The Daily PLAY Plans or one of your own.
 - Build a bank of PLAY Ideas

Let's get into it!

The form is titled "daily play plan" in a blue header. It includes the following sections:

- date:** A line for writing the date.
- Week:** A row of seven colored circles representing days of the week (S, M, T, W, T, F, S).
- top priorities:** A row of six empty circles for listing priorities.
- household duties:** A table with four rows and one column for listing tasks.
- to do list:** A section with a legend for "Daily 5 am" (pink) and "Daily 5 pm" (light blue), followed by a list of items with corresponding colored circles.
- Activity Planning:** A grid with four rows. The left column is labeled "Activity #1" through "Activity #4". The right column has categories: "Shopping/Gift Ideas", "Self-Care", "Gratitude", and "Calls/Records".

TERMS & CONDITIONS

This planner is for personal use only and is not to be sold, shared, redistributed in any form. If you love this document as much as we do and would like your family and friends to have their own copy, please refer them to our online store to obtain a copy.

Hi there, PLAYmates, how are you? I am giddy with excitement to have y'all join me for a mini lesson about discovering realistic pockets of time in PLAY.

One of the most common questions I am asked is How do I PLAY when I am busy and there just isn't enough time. And quite often it seems/feels that the current play routine isn't working, and an overhaul is needed.

sound familiar?

So, today, let's chat about goal setting in a very basic sense and work towards creating a plan of action.

'Start with the end goal in mind'

1. **WORK BACKWARDS** - have you ever heard of the phrase 'think of the bigger picture'? This is the concept of seeing yourself in the future, in a place where you want to be, doing what you want to be doing and really thinking about what matters the most to you...where do you want to be in 20, 40 plus years and so on.

This bigger picture thinking enables you to envision an end goal. Which in turn leads you to a path of working backwards...taking steps that lead you right back to that end goal...eg, establishing goals starting with yearly, then monthly and then working towards daily and schedule blocks of time within the day enabling you to create bite size chunks that take you one step closer to the bigger picture

Our routines and schedules often shape our days.

2. DAILY ROUTINE & SCHEDULE with PLAY

When first establishing a play routine (new or a revamp of an old one) start to build the routine around when people wake, eat and sleep.

Be mindful that you are allowing each member enough time to complete these tasks.

Then add in the extras, things like housework, homework time, extracurricular activities, family time...the non-negotiable things happening in your day-to-day life. Remember to factor in travel time and buffer times (time set for nothing, other than for when things may not quite go to plan).

You should now be left with realistic pockets of time that can be used for PLAY. These blocks of time will vary from Mumma to Mumma, family to family.

Next mini lesson: **SCHEDULE BLOCKING**...learning how to create a daily/weekly schedule that is bound by times.

discovering realistic pockets of time in play

Schedule Blocking is about carving out time in your daily routine and schedule to undertake, work towards, complete tasks/activities within a specific block of time.

The benefits of schedule blocking are:

- returning focus to our bigger picture goals
- feeling a sense of achievement and success by working towards the bigger picture goals.
- being present
- working on a variety of things

Love the idea, unsure where to start...let's chat about how it can work for you with a set of *actionable* steps that you can start straight away.

1. Using our latest shop product (Schedule Block Planner is a freebie for you below) start writing in your daily schedule...these are the non-negotiables, events, activities that are a met with time frames.
2. Then focus on what matters the most to you. What areas of your life do you want to spend more time doing? What things make you happy? You may need to write these down on a separate piece of paper or the goals sheets in our [daily PLAY Planner](#).
3. Now find times within the day/week that you know are most likely to work for you to do these things. Schedule block chunks of time and write these things down because when the next opportunity presents itself you are going to follow this plan. You are going to take small steps towards your bigger picture goals each day, my friend!! #fromlittlthingsbigthingsgrow

Once you have tried this, you will discover what has worked well and what hasn't worked so well. This is a chance for you to tweak your system and try it again when you next can. Remember, this plan isn't a forever plan, it is more about developing the daily habit of scheduling blocking - carving out time to do the things that matter most to you...taking small steps towards those bigger goals.

schedule Block Planner

Time	Tasks/Responsibilities	Done
5.00		
6.00		
7.00		
8.00		
9.00		
10.00		
11.00		
12.00 noon		
1.00		
2.00		
3.00		
4.00		
5.00		
6.00		
7.00		
8.00		

schedule Block Planner

Time	Tasks/Responsibilities	Done
Early Morning		
Mid Morning		
Lunch		
Early Afternoon		
Late Afternoon		
Evening		
Night		

In the first lesson we discovered our realistic pockets of time for PLAY, knowing what worked and fit our lives best, was not necessarily the same as someone else. This will be the same with the next lesson.

Today we are going to take this one step further by creating a *plan for play*.

1. Think about what areas of learning/PLAY that are of interest to your little ones eg. Science, Dramatic Play, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical activity etc. This may not be apparent to y'all straight away, and in that case, spend some time observing your little ones in PLAY to spark some ideas.
2. Once you have some ideas, break this down even further by jotting down possible theme ideas that are sure to engage your learners eg. Cooking, art, craft, nature play, construction, dinosaurs, dolls, Barbie, playdough, storytelling, books, outer space etc
3. Think about the skills and abilities shown by your learners eg, can hold and cut with a pair of scissors, enjoys turn taking, initiates conversation with siblings etc.

Now, let's go back and cover what you should have...you will have found pockets of realistic time for PLAY and some themes and activity ideas to start with. You are now ready to decide what pocket of time will be your trial time. The time each day where you will set up for *play* and the time when your learners will PLAY.

'Each learning experience created by you is designed to meet their needs' celebrateplay

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAY ROUTINE - this is when you get stuck into the actual **PLAYING** bit of your new *play* routine...where things will most likely be a mix of learners being super engaged to not interested at all to well they played with that set up differently to what I imagined (totally love when this happens). I recommend setting up for PLAY ahead of time, so

activities can begin straight away, minimising transition and disruptions. It also takes the pressure off to setting something up whilst their eager little hands **help**. Remember PLAY set ups do not need to be perfect...inviting and following their lead is the way to go. We will share more on this in the upcoming weeks.

IMPROVING THE PLAY ROUTINE - after testing out the new routine/s, jot down what worked well and what didn't work well. Reflect on the reasons why this may have happened eg. Not enough time, lack of preparation, little ones were tired or unwell, lack of interest, activity too challenging, worked well because I was prepared ahead of time etc

"Decide what you want or ought to do with the day, then always do it at exactly the same moment every day, and passion will give you no trouble." W. H. Auden

MAINTAINING THE PLAY ROUTINE - set visual timetables, alarms and timers, post it note reminders, vision boards and screensaver reminders, jump into the *projectplay* community and share, whatever it is, that works for you, in place to help you to remember your new routine and what you are working towards (remember the things that matter the most to you - your bigger picture goals). These small steps will add up to big steps and ultimately developing habits that have you maintaining your routine.

Let the routines do the work...once you are confident in maintaining your routines and they have become daily habits, let the routines do the work...enjoy and celebrate the systems you have created that fit your life. Come and share in the *projectplay* community how you have celebrated!

...remember there will be times when your ideal routine may not work despite your best efforts...this is life. You can still totally rock this Motherhood PLAY gig...by picking up from where you left and remembering things like - what is this routine going to mean for me? What will it help me to accomplish? What is my bigger picture goal?

TIP

- If you need to work on the home organisational front before implementing a PLAY routine...check out [@leannebakerdaily](#) This is the perfect space to find inspiration around laundry schedules, meal planning and zone cleaning with the clock set. Leanne, the Mum behind the biz, is a champion at this!!

Last lesson you created a plan for PLAY that worked for you in your current season of life. Over the past few weeks, you will have worked towards maintaining this routine once it was established and found to be working great.

Today we are going to build upon that plan for PLAY routine with creating a bank of staple PLAY Ideas... a series of PLAY ideas that you can set up with ease, confidence and minimal time. The next step in your PLAY journey is here!!

Let's just take a moment to celebrate how awesome you are for getting here...go YOU and well done! please accept a virtual high five from me. Don't forget to celebrate your achievement/s because you deserve it!!

Today we are going to talk a bit about Invitation to PLAY, along with PLAY Trays and Small World PLAY with the confidence you can introduce these into your daily play routine.

When we first started planning for *play* with greater intention...we worked on developing our knowledge and skills on three different types of set ups. These fast became our go-to play ideas-the ones we relied upon.

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.

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, nature, walls that teach (interactive), figurines and accessories and pops of colour.

my journey side note ...so when I started, I looked at our physical learning environment, how I could set it up in a pretty and practical way. I began with cube storage units with fabric boxes. This soon became open shelves and two cube storage units and then a few more cube storage units. Then it moved to walls that teach, sensory tables, small world storage unit and a desk space. And now, it is a series of Invitations to PLAY, a set toy rotation, with a play surface and storage in one, and a desk space. It is an ever-changing space to meet our needs and moods.

PLAY TRAYS - trays of all sorts filled with items to play with.

my journey side note This was one of the first types of play I set up with our toddler learner. I filled baskets with books and toys that we could discover together and safe sensory bases in trays with animals and figurines in divider trays. I used these two types of activities daily rotating the themes and skills development focuses.

SMALL WORLD PLAY - is creating real life scenarios using small figures and objects. They tend to be set up in themes (ones relevant and meaningful to the learners) eg. Farm, Zoo, Dinosaur, Construction, City and often include a sensory element (grains, water, sand, nature, pasta) which adds another dimension to the learning.

my journey side note When I first started this style of PLAY set ups I had a fair few resources from our teaching stash plus those I had for my toddler (this began when my second baby was born). Remember the Little People toy sets by Fisher Price, y'all might still have some, I often used these as they gave us a great starting point. The theme was already decided, and it often had all the pieces needed to create an authentic small world. We would pop a sensory base in the bottom of the tray and place the Little People in a familiar situation and PLAY. When I had this down pat, we moved into small world with animal figurines.

ACTION PLAN – Sit down and write a list of PLAY Ideas your little one shows interest in, you feel confident in setting up and take minimal time. Use the worksheet below or your daily PLAY Planner.

Need some help – come and ask in the Project PLAY Membership group and we can bounce ideas together!!

BONUS

In the PLAY Portal, I have added the '7-day Invitation to PLAY Challenge'. This involved learning some background knowledge about creating PLAY Invitations to support Mums in setting up for Play Based learning in the home.

This challenge will be running again soon, and you will be able to join in. I will let you know in the FB group.

Next unit: PLAY THEORY