

# PLAY Strategies – Part 1

Hi PLAYmates, it is lovely to see you here taking the next step forward in your PLAY journey. I would love to hear how you are going...you can send me an email or message in the Project PLAY membership group to share your journey.

At this point you will have seen the glossary of terms we use, discovered realistic pockets of time for play, read our schedule blocking tips, created a plan for play in your play space, developed a bank of PLAY Ideas – go to set ups and learnt about different theories in PLAY.

In this series of mini lessons (3 lessons-part 1) you will:

- Learn about PLAY Strategies – the different strategies used to support learners in PLAY Based Learning such as:
  - Learn more about Follow their Lead
- Discover what your learners are really interested in and how to find those interests and
- Ways to create play-based learning environments with greater intention.

Part 2 will look at strategies used to set up PLAY once the learning environment is established.

Let's get into it!

**DISCLAIMER** – All ideas shared are my own opinions based on my knowledge and experience.

Hey there PLAYmates, it is super exciting to see you here again...taking the next step forward in your PLAY journey.

We are going to chat about follow their lead...what it means, what it can look like and how you can integrate it into your daily PLAY routine.

## **Follow their lead - what does it mean?**

It is a term often used in the early childhood setting and in play environments. It means to observe the interests of learners and to then create learning experiences and environments that foster these interests.

## **What can' follow their lead' look like?**

☞ learning experiences set up based on careful observation of little learners interests, conversation and skills.

☞ parents taking on the role of facilitator rather than leading the learning and then supporting the learners in leading their own learning.

☞ Note taking of what your learners find fun - knowing what makes their eyes sparkle with joy.

☞ Thoughts about why they enjoyed a particular activity and how could you extend upon this *play*.

...so with this in mind... *jot down your thoughts...what does this term mean to you? and how do you think this information can help you in play?*

## How can I integrate this into our daily routine?

**Join in the PLAY** - by taking on the role of another child and playing in the experience as they would, is a great way to enter their world. It promotes opportunities to interact and connect with one another. And helps when creating new learning experiences.

•**Notice what things motivate/ your learner/s and when in play, look for clues as they play.** Eg. If you see your little one laughs when the blocks fall over, think about why this might be...fun, cause and effect, crashing noise.

Once the emotional interest is determined, this is a stepping stone into learning together.

•**Set up challenging activities**, to create opportunities to help your learner/s with increasing their developmental skills. Eg. If you have a learner/s that is enjoying cutting up paper, introduce an activity that is just out of the ability they demonstrate such as cutting on a straight line.

•**STRETCHING OUT** is a great way to extend PLAY. This encourages communication, time to extend the thinking process and foster sustained engagement.

Eg. If your learner/s enjoys playing in a pizza shop, stretch this out, to cooking pizzas in the kitchen or a pizza making PLAYdate or reading about pizza making or the history of pizza making.

*what strategy will you start with - 1,2,3 or 4?*

*play strategies - notes*

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Last lesson we talked about **Follow Their Lead** and what this meant, looked like and how it fit into our daily PLAY routine. One of the key learnings was embedded in learning about our little ones **Interests**.

...so let's start with a definition.

**Interest Based Learning** - We understand interest based learning to be using a learner's interest (things they like to do, show preference in, things that make them laugh, eyes sparkle and smile) to guide future learning experiences.

### **Benefits of Interest Based Learning**

- more enjoyable,
- shows an increase in focus, motivation, retention and
- possibly developing a love of learning.

### **Two ways to discover and find what interests your little learner**

- Playing with your little ones and taking notice of what they enjoy.
- Letting learners direct their learning and see what they want to do, how they use resources and listening to what they share during play.

play strategies – notes

**Jot down what action you will take.**

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## What is the learning environment?

The learning environment is the space in which learners play and learn in. It can be found in many different places – including home and educational settings as well as indoors and outdoors.

It is a place where planned and spontaneous learning takes place and can be a mix of child led and parent/adult led.

## What can I do to prepare the learning environment for PLAY?

The Learning Environment works best when it is set up in a way that inspires learners to play in meaningful ways, encourages them to value resources, builds connectedness and helps them to maintain the space in an organised and tidy way.

Some things to think about when preparing the learning environment are:

- Establishing a positive learning culture (conversation, trust, respect, positive interactions etc)
- Best ways to utilise the space/s for learning
- Safety
- How to celebrate success – what this will look and feel like
- Developing ideas on what learning is relevant to learners
- Building a code of conduct (rules/expectations/routines/rhythms)
- Creating spaces and systems that little learners understand (sometimes referred to as a sense of order)
- Fostering a rich language environment
- Building on your own knowledge and understanding of children and learning to improve your current practice.

