

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 (3 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.

Let's get into it!

daily play plan

date _____

S M T W T F S

top priorities

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

household duties

Kitchen Beds Homework
 Laundry Lunchboxes Other
 Vacuum General Meal prep

to do list

Daily 5 am Daily 5 pm

Activity #1	Shopping/Gift Ideas
Activity #2	Self-Care
Activity #3	Gratitude
Activity #4	Calls/Records

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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!!

JUGGLING CHANGES IN THE ROUTINE AROUND PLAY

In the previous lesson we talked about taking things one step further and creating a plan for play. We implemented a play routine and learnt how to maintain this routine.

BUT, what do we do when our littles have changed and the routine we had in place no longer works to meets our needs?

This is when we need to take a closer look at our routines, our little ones needs and make the necessary adjustments to cater for these changes in our children.

Some areas that may need adjustments are around:

- Meal Prep and cooking
- Extra-Curricular Activities and
- Nap Times

Some tips to help you navigate these changes are:

- Meal Planning – having set meals allocated to set days/nights to minimise the time needed to think about what to eat, time spent cooking and cleaning. These meals can be based on what is happening each night.
- Making room for extra curricular activities - setting up a launch pad (with belongings needed for extra curricular activity can live) and choosing meals that can be cooked with ease on these afternoons/nights.
- Swapping around or increasing play resources in the space to work around nap times (particularly if naps are being dropped). Eg daily Activity Tubs or Sit With Me Time.

TIPS

- Make one change at a time – small steps add up and it helps to avoid overwhelm.
- Know this will be trial and error and may not work well the first time.