

Playful Learning Planner

A planner to help you use the playful learning indicators to increase engagement, enhance learning, and make school more enjoyable

1. **Identify an experience in which you would like to support learning through play** (a particular class, a theme, a unit of learning, or something else).
2. **Consider how you can structure the experience to encourage...** (choose one or more of the below indicators as your focus)
 - ▽ **Leading learning:** Playful learners *feel* invested, motivated, determined, and independent. Playful learning *looks* active, participatory, and collaborative, with learners making decisions about how, where, what, and with whom to learn. Learners also support each other and value the opinions and ideas of others.
 - ▼ For example, enable learners to lead their learning by giving them a choice regarding 1) *content* (e.g., What aspect of World War II would you like to learn about?); 2) *the learning process* (e.g., Would you like to study alone or with a classmate?); or 3) *assessment* (e.g., How would you like to show what you know—write a paper? create a video? something else?).
 - ▽ **Exploring the unknown:** Playful learners *feel* surprised, fascinated, and inspired. Playful learning *looks like* inquiring, experimenting, imagining, questioning, taking risks, and actively participating.
 - ▼ For example, to encourage exploring the unknown, pose questions without predetermined answers; do something out of the ordinary; invite an unexpected guest into the classroom provide an unusual material; or go outside.
 - ▽ **Finding joy in learning:** Playful learners *feel* trust, fun, excitement, and challenge, along with a sense of belonging and safety. Playful learning *looks like* celebrating, competing, joking, singing, smiling, and laughing.
 - ▼ For example, to support finding joy, allow students to learn together, face and overcome manageable challenges, sing, dance, or celebrate learning.
 - ▽ Note: The indicators and markers above are based on the PoP cross-cultural playful learning indicators.¹ If you have developed your own indicators, use them instead.

Tips for Using This Tool

- ▷ If you use another planner, this tool can provide a reminder to consider the indicators of playful learning.

More Than One Way

- ▶ Plan and reflect with one or more colleagues who can share their perspectives and support you in trying something new. Curriculum specialists (e.g., art, music, or physical education teachers) offer different disciplinary perspectives.
- ▶ Include students in the planning and reflection process. Ask for their suggestions about adding more agency, wonder, or joy to the learning experience. Get their feedback after trying something new.

Notes

1. For more information about the cross-cultural playful learning indicators, see Chapter 3 of Mardell, B., Ryan, J., Krechevsky, M., Baker, M., Schulz, T. S., and Liu-Constant, Y. (2023). *A pedagogy of play: Supporting playful learning in classrooms and schools*. Cambridge, MA: Project Zero. Available at www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/pedagogy-of-play-book

To create your own indicators, see the **Playful Learning Indicator Guide: A Weekly Handbook for Research Teams**. Available at www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/playful-learning-indicators-guide