

Why Play Works Facilitation Guide 4

Each session would have some time for discussing the themes from the section read that month all together and some time for small group sharing/discussion. The general format for each session is:

1. Small talk/Arrival time (5 minutes)
 - a. We will take a few minutes to talk about the weather or do an icebreaker. Participants will be invited to volunteer to plan an icebreaker for the next session.
2. Today's theme (5 minutes)
 - a. The facilitator will share announcements and introduce the theme for the day. This leads naturally to the discussion.
3. Discussion (20 minutes)
 - a. Discuss the 3-5 questions that were sent in advance for each session. Use breakout rooms depending on the size of the group:
 - i. Up to 8 people stay in one room
 - ii. 9-15 people 2 breakout rooms
 - iii. 16-23 people in 3 breakout rooms
 - iv. 24-31 in 4 breakout rooms
 - v. 32-40 in 5 breakout rooms
 - b. *Will we ask for volunteers to facilitate the breakout rooms?*
 - c. At the end of 20 minute, bring the group back together and check-in on how the discussion went. Then transition into the time for playing together.
4. Let's Play (20 minutes)
 - a. Research tells us that play is important for keeping children, and adults healthy. So we are going to take time to play as part of the book club.

Book Club meeting 4: Everyday Play

Themes: Purposeful Changes & Transitions

Read pages 118-143 (26 pages)

- Here, There, and Everywhere
- Chaos by Design
- Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes
- Driven to Distraction

Small talk/Arrival time (5 minutes)

Today we'll be talking about changes and transitions, and January is a time a lot of people think about making changes. What changes or transitions are you thinking about this time of year?

Today's theme (5 minutes)

As I said, we'll be talking today about purposeful changes and transitions – and making the best of the situation you are in.

Some highlights from our discussion in December where we talked about setting group agreements, managing risk and keeping kids safe. One of the key takeaways for me was the idea that equipping children to be responsible risk takers is important in preparing them to be successful in the future and that opportunities to take risk – though play or other experiences are important to their development.

Today we'll be talking about some ways to impose order in play – thinking about using your space, managing transitions and using ritual or signals to create order out of the chaos that can be a natural part of afterschool time.

Were there any ideas that struck you from this section – pages 118-143 – that you want to be sure we talk about?

Then let's jump into the discussion questions.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Set up just the number of breakout rooms needed: Up to 8 people stay in one room, 9-15 people 2 breakout rooms, etc. Send participants into breakout rooms if needed.

Discuss the questions shared in advance.

1. The author, Jill VIALET, talks about using play and human-centered design (page 129) to solve problems around recess, or in our case, afterschool, where you are working with a lot of constraints on space, time and so on. What are the challenges you would like to be able to solve?
2. This section mentioned being intentional a lot. What are your intentions for the time kids spend in your program? What do you want to be intentional about? (See page 130 for more ideas about this.)
3. "Play makes transitions way better for everyone" (p 135). What strategies, rituals or signals do you use to help your students transition from school to afterschool, or at other points during your day?

Bring the group back together and check-in on how the discussion went. Then transition into the time for playing together.

Let's have each group share one important idea that led to an interesting discussion.

Let's Play (20 minutes)

Now we are going to take some time to learn from each other. We asked everyone to be prepared to share a favorite game from that is not in the Game Guide in the back of your book.

Return to the same breakout rooms if needed. If possible, have the facilitator move between breakout rooms to observe and answer questions.

As you share your game, briefly let us know how the game is played, but then focus on why this game is memorable. Why did you choose to share this particular game?

Watch the time, but allow as much time as you can for sharing. Then when you have about 10 minutes left, switch to discussion of ideas shared.

1. What did you notice about what made these games memorable?
2. Does that give you any ideas for changing how you are playing in your program?

Wrap Up

Thanks for joining us today. Today's theme was about purposeful changes and transitions and we started out thinking about how January is a time of making intentional changes in our lives. I think that carried into our discussion about how we can use play to provide structure in way that helps children relax and have fun – and grow and develop. One of the key ideas in this section, on page 130, is "Play helps us create the best possible experiences for kids."

I encourage you to move forward with your ideas about how to do this in 2024. Be empowered to have fun and make their time in your program a memorable and significant part of their childhood.

Our next session on February 8 will cover the last part of the book, page 144- 184. We'll be thinking about some issues around equity, including all children and leveling the playing field.