

Provocations or Invitations to Play

What is a Provocation or invitation to play?

A provocation or invitation to play can come in many forms, but it is intended to encourage the child to engage in play that is open ended and has no criteria for success, or final outcome.

What is the aim of setting up a provocation or invitation to play?

To encourage free play and expand their thinking in a fresh and creative way, without being directed by an adult. Provocations and invitations to play are a great way to introduce real life objects and pieces from nature into the child's play. Natural objects and real-life objects give more sensory feedback to the child compared with plastic toys that will only have a few functions and can only be used in a specific way.

Why are invitations to play and provocations important?

Play that is initiated by the child, encourages new ideas and expands their ability to explore, make choices and develop independence. They can have a first-hand experience and explore exciting everyday objects that can be played with in variety of ways. There is no wrong way to play.

What to include in a provocation or invitation to play?

- Materials that are open ended, often called loose parts.
- Natural objects such as pebbles and shells, sticks and leaves.
- Every day real life objects such as tea sets and kitchen utensils
- Sensory materials such as play dough, rice, and pasta.
- Toys and objects that are high interest to the child, such as dinosaurs, cars, diggers and small world people. These can be combined with rice, sand, or crushed cereal to create a small world and ignite their imagination.
- Recycled materials, boxes, tubes, and containers.



Parent Partnership

– Try this at home:

Making a tea party invitation to play by collecting items from a play kitchen and presenting them on a rug or a table. Add a napkin, party hat and a teddy. Or real tea bags, water, and playdough cookies.



Links to EYFS: C&L, PD, PSED.

Links to SEND Code of Practice: C&I, SEMH, C&L, P&S