

Activity: Playing games on digital things.

This activity supports children to develop positive habits and approaches to playing with digital things. The focus is on two aspects. First, how to use digital things as part of a game, and secondly, developing ways to use digital games for play. You will need digital devices for this activity.

Readiness

Children are ready for this activity when they can talk about choices they, and other people, make – why does Mum use a phone, why do they watch a particular TV show, etc. If children are having difficulty with this activity, you can have conversations about the digital things they see their family using and the choices they make:

“What does your family watch/do on screens at home?” “What do you like about it?”

To extend this, you may like to provide opportunities to recreate some of the things they like watching, e.g. If they like watching unboxing videos you could record a video of the children ‘unboxing’ something themselves. Talk about why they like these videos.

Other Playing IT Safe activities to further explore who uses digital things include:

- My favourite things
- Who uses digital things

Description

Part 1: Playing games with digital things

This activity can be used at the start of any day but is also particularly useful when you change the room around and introduce new activities.

To set up, use a digital device (phone or tablet) to take photos of different items in the room.

Then, as children arrive tell them you are playing a game using a digital thing. Tell them you have taken photographs of things in the room you want them to find. Show them an image and get them to find that thing and bring it to you. This teaches them that digital things can be used for games that we play off the screen.

A way to scaffold this with older children is to have them take the photos and run the game of “seek” for you and other children in the room.

Part 2: Playing games on digital things

You can set up a tablet where children can play a specific game that aligns with an activity you are doing. This works well if the device is laid out for children to engage with as they see fit and the games and exploratory, open ended and creative, rather than instructional.

We would recommend:

- Apps from the development team TOCA BOCA.
- Apps that support exploration like ABC LITTLE EXPLORERS.
- Apps that offer simple creative play like those from SAGO MINI.

Resources required

Phone or tablet

Purposefully-framed play

You will structure these activities by:

- Explaining how the technology will be used in the game.
- Setting up the activity to achieve a specific outcome (find the item in the photo).
- Choose a single digital game with a specific purpose in mind.

Prompts

- What do you like about playing with digital things?
- When is it not as fun to play with a digital thing?

Learning statement

<Name of child> has demonstrated the ability to use digital things to play and engage with the world. They recognise that play can happen both with and without technology and that through play with and on digital things they can discover, explore, find new things and play with others.

Alignment

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

This is evident when children:

- Demonstrate an ability to play a game and adapt and improve in a skill or knowledge area as they play.
- Demonstrate an understanding about how different digital things offer them different play experiences and they actively make decisions and play in different ways with those digital things.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.

This is evident when children:

- Experience a range of digital games and media and demonstrate an understanding of how to use, play and experience these digital things.
- Create and imagine using digital things and digital games.

