



Steps To Ownership

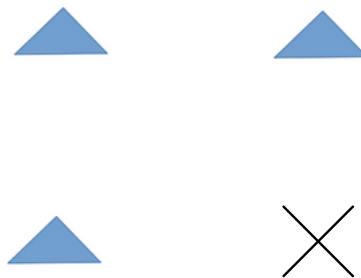
One of the most enjoyable and effective ways to engage and connect with young children is to INVOLVE them more in the ideas for and the delivery of the session.

Children will love being given more responsibility so for our Captains of Play it is a very powerful and rewarding thing to do **BUT**, giving children more responsibility, ownership and choice needs to be done carefully and in appropriate stages and ways. Going from giving no responsibility to handing everything over to the children is fraught with danger so just as you would increase the challenge in an activity, carefully manage the amount of ownership you hand over until you can see that the children are ready for more.

One great way to start is to get the children to help you set out or mark out an area for an activity. Let's look how this might be done using a number of smaller steps:

Step 1: Test the water.

Find out where the children are at. As a Captain of Play you will probably use lots of square or rectangular shaped areas of different sizes. Step 1 might be you putting 3 cones down (as in the diagram below) and asking the children to make it into a square. This will help you assess the children's capability.

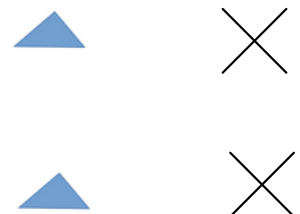


If the children pass this "test" on another occasion put down only two cones in different ways and ask the same question; "are you able to make this into a square?"

Like this:



Or like this:



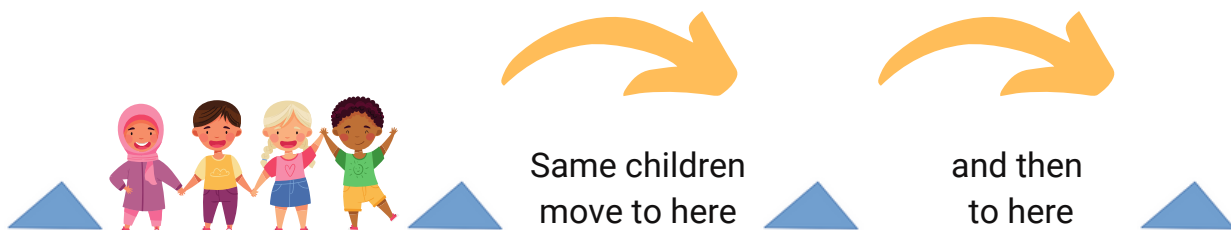


From these small square areas, once the children have grasped the idea, you can add the next important part. Ask the children to count a set number of their STEPS between each cone that they are now going to drop down in a STRAIGHT line. (see the diagram below):



Remember, children's steps will be smaller than yours so bear this in mind and also that this may require lots of practice but please don't be put off – children will always surprise you and if you go about it in a friendly and encouraging way then it will enhance the environment you want to create.

Another unusual way to space out cones in a straight line (and this one gives you a little more control if you need it) is to say that there needs to be so many children standing shoulder to shoulder between each cone. This can be made into a "race against time" as you and your assistant (or a parent) race to put your long line of cones down in the shortest time. The children will have to work together with you to accomplish this and it can be a great way to have fun whilst marking out your first area.



Following these steps will help you involve the children to a greater extent in your sessions so be patient, kind and be very clear in what you want the children to help you with.

And remember – have fun!