

Playful By Design Tool: Home Printing Download

What's on offer?

This Home Printing Download is part of a broader set of physical and digital resources which can be accessed at www.digitalfutures.org/playful_by_design_tool

The Playful by Design Tool can be used at any stage of the design process. It includes three components: principle cards, prompt cards and playboards. Use this document to print the resources you require using a home or work printer. Please note that if you would like to have a set of cards professionally printed, you can access guidance and resources needed for this via the Digital Futures Commission website using the link above.

Guide to Printing

This Home Printing Download supports you to print the resources you need using a home or work printer. For best results:

- Use a printer which supports double sided printing
- Print resources onto thin white card
- Make sure print output is at 100%
- Cut each card out carefully using the dotted lines as a guide
- Laminate the printed cards for increased durability

Feedback

If you have used the Playful by Design Tool, please give us feedback **here**. It will take a maximum of 5 minutes to complete. Thank you so much for your support!

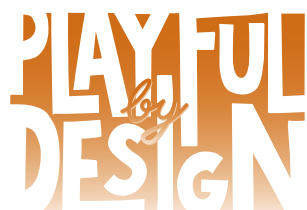
About this resource

This Playful by Design tool has been created by the Digital Futures Commission, an exciting research collaboration of unique organisations that invites innovators, policy makers, regulators, academics and civil society to work together to unlock digital innovation in the interests of children and young people.

It has been created to support designers in improving children's opportunities for free play in a digital world, and to tackle the challenges in developing digital products and services that respect children's rights. It includes a range of resources to provoke reflection, discussion and fresh ideas. It was developed iteratively through development workshops with small, medium and large companies.

It is freely available for anyone involved in creating digital products used by children. It can be used by product developers and designers, whatever their experience or responsibilities, working in group settings or individually.


Terms of use: This Playful by Design Tool is licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND.



Playful By Design Tool: Home Printing Download





What's included?

Principle Cards: The principle cards set out design considerations to embed children's rights into digital products and services.







	Print pages 3 - 6	Use these in your design and development process to meet your objectives.
---	-----------------------------	---

Prompt Cards: The prompt cards present questions to guide your design thinking. These are matched to the principle cards (check the icon on the cards).

There are four types of prompts:

	Print pages 7 - 24	WHY? cards prompt you to focus your attention on player experiences.
	Print pages 25 - 42	WHAT IF...? cards prompt you to consider design alternatives.
	Print pages 43 - 60	HOW? cards prompt you to identify design options and translate your ideas into actions.
	Print pages 61 - 66	WILD CARDS need to be paired with a prompt card. Pick one at random to uncover a new approach to tackling the prompt question.

Playboards: The playboards support you to use the cards in flexible ways, whether with your design team or by yourself. Choose any of the playboards to start using the Playful by Design Tool for the first time. There are five playboards to meet designers' requirements at the time of use:

	Print pages 67 - 70	Print a full set of playboard cards (which contain a QR code to access animated guides)
	Print page 71	Playboard 1: The Knotty Web (A4 Guide) Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles relate to your current challenges to inspire design concepts.
	Print page 72	Playboard 2: Check It (A4 Guide) Aim: Identify which design principles are already embedded into your product design and which need more attention.
	Print pages 73	Playboard 3: Mix It Up! (A4 Guide) Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles are in focus for you at this moment in time, and reflect on your current priorities.
	Print pages 74	Playboard 4: Friction (A4 Guide) Aim: Articulate a challenging question that can refresh your design aims.
	Print pages 75	Playboard 5: Q&A (A4 Guide) Aim: Get the conversation going and generate debate. Remember, the best questions and answers often lead to more questions!

Be Welcoming



Prioritise digital features that are inclusive, sociable and welcoming to all, reducing hateful communication and forms of exclusion, and reflecting multiple identities.

Enhance Imagination



Prioritise creative resources and imaginative, open-ended play over pre-determined pathways built on popularity metrics or driven by advertising or other commercial pressures.

Enable Open-ended Play



Provide and enhance features that offer easy-to use pathways, flexibility and variety as these support children's agency and encourage their imaginative, stimulating and open-ended play.

Adopt Ethical Commercial Models



Reduce compulsive features designed to prolong user engagement or cultivate dependency on games, apps or platforms, so children's immersive play is intrinsically motivated and freely chosen.



Ensure Safety



Ensure children's play in online spaces is safe by design, including giving them control over who can contact them and supplying help when needed.

Allow for Experimentation



Recognise that exploration, invention and a degree of risk-taking is important in children's play, and that the burden should not always fall on them to be cautious or anxious, or to follow rules set by others.

Be Age Appropriate



Respect the needs of children of different ages by providing age-appropriate opportunities for play, while also allowing for safe intergenerational play.





Why?

Why might a child feel that the digital product (or part of it) is not really 'for them'?



Why?

Why might a child with different abilities struggle with the flow of play?



Why?

Why might a child find themselves being mean or unkind when playing?



Why?

Why might a child feel included when playing, whatever their background?





Why?

Why might a child find it hard to get started with your product?



Why?

Why might a child feel encouraged to generate new content or build new things with your product?



Why?

Why might a child feel as if their imagination is constrained, interrupted or boxed in?



Why?

Why might designs based on a child's past interactions make them feel manipulated, frustrated or disinterested?





Why?

Why might a child feel bored and that they are not achieving or creating anything new?



Why?

Why might a child feel that their play is imaginative and creative?



Why?

Why might a child feel they are able to explore and discover new possibilities?



Why?

Why might a child feel excited or thrilled when using your product or service?





Why?

Why might a child feel a sense of freedom when playing with your product?



Why?

Why might the experience make a child feel confident and in control?



Why?

Why might a child feel they must perform in a 'certain way' to play?



Why?

Why might a child feel that they can easily stop playing when they are hungry or tired?





Why?

Why might a child choose to return to your product regularly, without feeling compelled?



Why?

Why might a child feel pressured into 'liking' or engaging with your content?



Why?

Why might a child feel they must buy new items when playing, even if they can't afford them?



Why?

Why might a child feel compelled to share data, even when they don't want to?





Why?

Why might a child want to share their experience of play, or play with adults?



Why?

Why might a child report a problem or seek help when something happens that upsets them?



Why?

Why might a child accept an invitation from an adult they have not met before?



Why?

Why might a child feel safe when playing with your product?





Why?

Why might a child feel threatened or uncomfortable when playing with your product?



Why?

Why might a child want to break some rules or push boundaries?



Why?

Why might a child invent new rules or ways of engaging with your product?



Why?

Why might taking a risk when playing feel satisfying, exciting or enjoyable for the child?





Why?

Why might a child use external software or apps to communicate with other players?



Why?

Why might a child keep seeking new challenges?



Why?

Why might a child feel uncomfortable when playing with parents, caregivers or older siblings?



Why?

Why might a child feel invested in their engagement with your product?





Why?

Why might a child feel that they are being treated unfairly when using your product or service?



Why?

Why might a child feel a sense of personal achievement when playing with your product?



Why?

Why might a child feel frustrated when using your product?





What if...?

What if you remove all representations of gender from the game?



What if...?

What if you remove one of the sensory inputs from gameplay?



What if...?

What if children could provide more support and encouragement for other players?



What if...?

What if a child's disability makes access challenging?





What if...?

What if a child's background puts them at a disadvantage when using your product or service?



What if...?

What if a child is rewarded for imagining new ways to play with your product?



What if...?

What if a child could re-build the environment with friends?



What if...?

What if you nudge a child towards an unexplored area?





What if...?

What if a child could express themselves freely?



What if...?

What if children can use their imagination to adapt the visual assets?



What if...?

What if you remove or change one of the 'pathways' or 'routes' through to your product?



What if...?

What if your product is like a cardboard box so a child can use it in multiple ways?





What if...?

What if curiosity becomes the 'aim' of the game?



What if...?

What if the 'starting point' is different every time?



What if...?

What if children can amend your guide on how to play?



What if...?

What if you give a child the option to remove all nudges and notifications?





What if...?

What if your product lets a child stop playing without feeling like they are losing out?



What if...?

What if a child can only access the game once a week?



What if...?

What if ad-free games are the industry standard?



What if...?

What if a child is prompted to reflect during play?





What if...?

What if you can create a system for managing user-generated content that doesn't need to be moderated?



What if...?

What if children can build their own 'codes of conduct' and 'codes of contact'?



What if...?

What if a child can challenge the restrictions that parents or caregivers put on their online activities?



What if...?

What if a child can see the data you hold about them and can control who has access to it?





What if...?

What if a child doesn't know how to ask for help?



What if...?

What if your product enables a child to make or break rules when playing?



What if...?

What if children coding their own content is integrated into product design?



What if...?

What if children's inventions are celebrated?





What if...?

What if there is no
'wrong way'?



What if...?

What if risk-taking
is rewarded?



What if...?

What if children are grouped
by interest rather than age?



What if...?

What if a child wants to play
with their teacher or their
parents or other adults?





What if...?

What if a child could guide new players?



What if...?

What if you misjudge or misunderstand a child's capabilities?



What if...?

What if you focus on benefits to a child rather than their needs?





How?

How can children from different financial backgrounds play together on an equal footing?



How?

How can you adapt your product to improve accessibility, so no child is disadvantaged when playing with peers?



How?

How can children see themselves, their cultures and values reflected in your product?



How?

How can you manage any toxic communication in your product?





How?

How can you ensure that play does not exclude children who don't fit the 'norm'?



How?

How can you guide children to contribute constructive and imaginative content?



How?

How can you facilitate a child's ability to extend a narrative or a form of play in new ways?



How?

How can you ensure that pathways are individualised rather than based on a 'typical user'?





How?

How can you be more responsive to individual player preferences?



How?

How can you give a child more control over their play experiences?



How?

How can you build flexibility into how a child can engage with your product?



How?

How can you diversify the pathways to create a range of experiences?





How?

How can you make your product 'playable' in different contexts, spaces and media forms?



How?

How can you present different 'starting points'?



How?

How can you support children to celebrate and share their creative achievements with others?



How?

How and when might you suggest moments of 'pause' or 'closure' in the game?





How?

How can you identify ethical commercial strategies that better align with your principles and goals?



How?

How can you ensure that notifications, commercial interruptions or pop-up data agreements do not overwhelm a child?



How?

How can you facilitate children's intrinsic motivation to play?



How?

How can you make the algorithms more transparent to and controllable by a child?





How?

How can you encourage a child to tell you when they experience a problem?



How?

How can you build a system that adapts its process of reporting and redress to a child's age?



How?

How can you give a child more control over the information recorded about them?



How?

How can you encourage children to engage in pro-social behaviours when using your product?





How?

How can you build a moderation system that balances a child's freedom of expression and safety?



How?

How could your product support children to experiment with different outcomes?



How?

How could you make the rule structures in your product more flexible?



How?

How can you design your product in ways that encourage children to challenge themselves constructively?





How?

How can you mitigate any negative effects of risk-taking without constraining children?



How?

How can you encourage children and adults to experiment together safely?



How?

How could your product better support children and adults to play together safely and fairly?



How?

How can you ensure that a child understands which age group your product is for, and why?





How?

How can you ensure that children of all ages get the help that they need when they need it?



How?

How can you include more clues and tricks on how to get better at playing or using a product?



How?

How can you make your product meet children's diverse interests and capacities?



Wild Card

Pick a random prompt card from the deck without looking.

Wild Card

Consider how this impacts on how 'immersive' the experience feels.

Wild Card

Choose another prompt card related to the same principle and explore any connections.

Wild Card

Consider the implications of your answer for a child who can only access your product when in a library or school setting.



Wild Card

Consider how you would respond to this at different stages of the design process.

Wild Card

Choose another prompt card related to a different principle.

Wild Card

Consider the implications for a child who experiences disability.

Wild Card

Ask a colleague with a different skill set, or a different role, to respond and compare.



Wild Card

Each time you answer one question, ask another one of your own (of the same type: Why? What if? How?), until you have a chain of five.

Wild Card

Note down as many responses as you can in one minute.

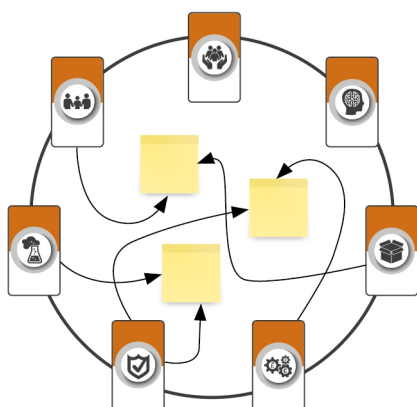
Wild Card

Read someone else's response and try to elaborate on it.





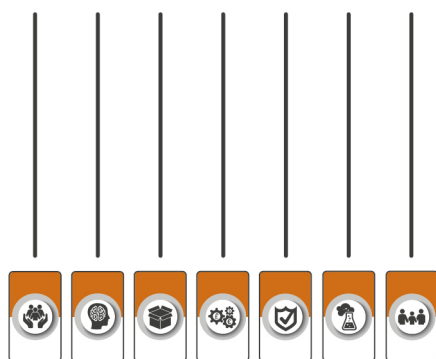
Playboard 1:
The Knotty Web



Playboard 2:
Check It



Playboard 3:
Mix It Up!



Playboard 4:
Friction



You might think you've got everything sorted, and that you've already embedded ethical and child rights-respecting principles into your design. But let's see if some Playful by Design principles could be developed further to improve a child's experience of your product.

Aim: Identify which design principles are already embedded into your product design and which need more attention.

Watch the animated guide



Read the instructions



Designing a product or service aligned with children's rights can be a complex process. The issues that arise are often knotty and require careful consideration. How do the challenges you face map onto the Playful by Design principles?

Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles relate to your current challenges to inspire design concepts.

Watch the animated guide



Read the instructions



It's not always easy to achieve designs that respect children's rights. You will have many competing priorities and aims, and while some Playful by Design principles may align with your product and processes, you may experience friction and challenges. What tensions arise when you try to embed multiple Playful by Design principles into your product development?

Aim: Articulate a challenging question that can refresh your design aims.

Watch the animated guide



Read the instructions



Although all the Playful By Design principles are important, some might be at the forefront of your mind at the moment. This may be for many reasons. But still, you could ask yourself: is it time to shift your focus?

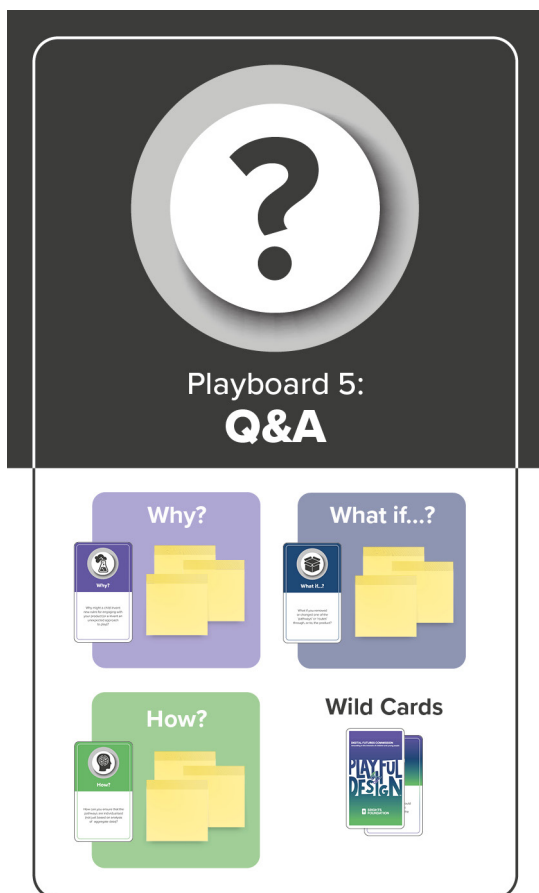
Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles are in focus for you at this moment in time, and reflect on your current priorities.

Watch the animated guide



Read the instructions





Throughout the design process we ask ourselves and our teams lots of questions to improve our products – Why? What if? How? Still, it can be useful for someone *outside* our context to challenge us to reflect on children's experiences, consider new approaches or identify the next steps. How might this Q&A session help you to improve your product?

Aim: Get the conversation going and generate debate. Remember, the best questions and answers often lead to more questions!

*Watch the
animated guide*



*Read the
instructions*





Playboard 1: The Knotty Web

Designing a product or service aligned with children's rights can be a complex process. The issues that arise are often knotty and require careful consideration. How do the challenges you face map onto the Playful by Design principles?

Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles relate to your current challenges to inspire design concepts.

You will need: Playful by Design principle cards, sticky notes and pen (digital or physical).

Instructions

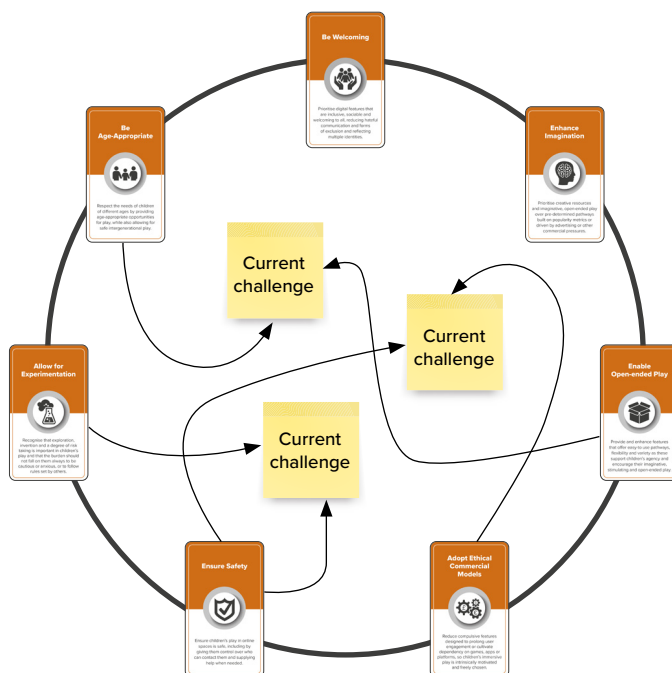
Step 1: Lay the Playful by Design principle cards out in a circle on a tabletop or virtual board (see below).

Step 2: In the centre of the circle, write your current challenges on sticky notes.

Step 3: Link each challenge to two of the relevant Playful by Design principles. (It's best to start with two, even if more apply!)

Step 4: Look at the web you have created and reflect on the principles that you have linked to.

Optional Step: Now that you have identified which Playful by Design principles relate to your current challenges, you can use the icons on the cards to identify relevant prompts. Reflect on children's experiences with your product by using the 'Why?' prompt cards. Consider alternative approaches to the design of your product, and explore the ways design decisions shape possibilities for play by using the 'What if...?' prompt cards. Plan ways to improve the features and functionality of your product with the 'How?' prompt cards. The Q&A playboard will help you record your ideas.



Watch the
animated guide





Playboard 2: Check It

You might think you've got everything sorted, and that you've already embedded ethical and child rights-respecting principles into your design. But let's see if some Playful by Design principles could be developed further to improve a child's experience of your product.

Aim: Identify which design principles are already embedded into your product design and which need more attention.

You will need: Playful by Design principle cards, sticky notes and pen (digital or physical).

Instructions

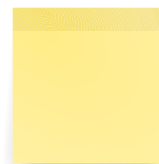
Step 1: Lay the Playful by Design principle cards out in a row on a tabletop or virtual board.

Step 2: For each principle in turn, reflect on whether and how it is embedded into your design, writing the answers on sticky notes to the right of each principle.

Step 3: Review your notes on the playboard, and identify which principles require further attention.

Optional Step: Now that you have worked out which Playful by Design principles need further attention, you can use the icons on the principle cards to identify relevant prompt cards. Reflect on children's experiences by using the 'Why?' prompt cards. Consider alternative approaches to the design of your product, and explore the ways design decisions shape possibilities for play using the 'What if...?' prompt cards. Plan ways to improve the features and functionality of your product with the 'How?' prompt cards. The Q&A playboard will help you record your ideas.

Watch the
animated guide





Playboard 3: Mix It Up!

Although all the Playful By Design principles are important, some might be at the forefront of your mind at the moment. This may be for many reasons. But still, you could ask yourself: is it time to shift your focus?

Aim: Identify which Playful by Design principles are in focus for you at this moment in time, and reflect on your current priorities.

You will need: Playful by Design principle cards, sticky notes and pen (digital or physical).

Instructions

Step 1: Lay the full deck of Playful by Design principle cards out side by side, horizontally, as if they are sliders on a mixing deck, and draw (or imagine) a vertical line above each of the cards (see below).

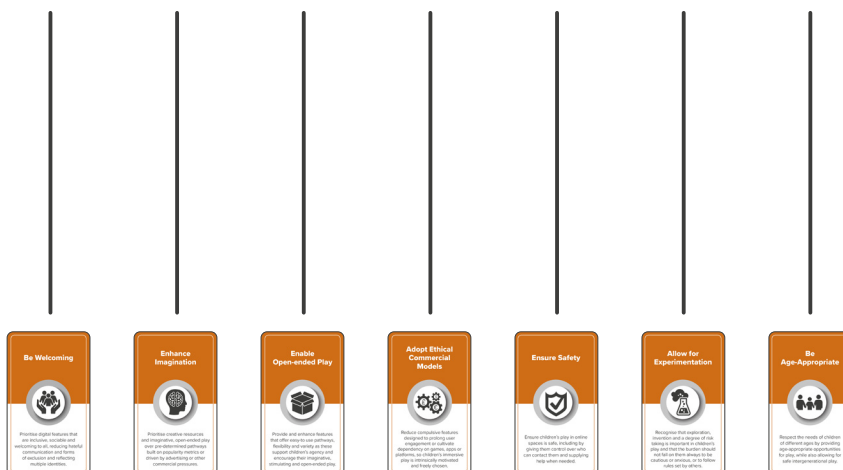
Step 2: Reflect on which design principles are occupying most of your attention at this moment in time.

Step 3: Place the principles that are occupying most of your attention at the top of their line and those that get less attention lower down.

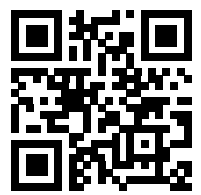
Note: Those Playful by Design principle cards that you placed higher up could be seen as 'louder' in your current stage of design, while those lower down may still be playing in the background but they are 'quieter', drawing less attention from the design team.

Step 4: Reflect on the spread of cards and the reasons behind this. Do you need to shift your focus or priorities now or in the future?

Optional Step: Now that you have worked out which Playful by Design principles are getting more or less attention, you can use the icons on the principle cards to identify relevant prompt cards. Reflect on children's experiences by using the 'Why?' prompt cards. Consider alternative approaches to the design of your product, and explore the ways design decisions shape possibilities for play using the 'What if...?' prompt cards. Plan ways to improve the features and functionality of your product with the 'How?' prompt cards. The Q&A playboard will help you record your ideas.



Watch the
animated guide





Playboard 4: Friction

It's not always easy to achieve designs that respect children's rights. You will have many competing priorities and aims, and while some Playful by Design principles may align with your product and processes, you may experience friction and challenges. What tensions arise when you try to embed multiple Playful by Design principles into your product development?

Aim: Articulate a challenging question that can refresh your design aims.

You will need: Playful by Design principle cards, sticky notes and pen (digital or physical).

Instructions

Step 1: Choose two Playful by Design principle cards and lay them out side by side with a sticky note in the gap in the centre (see below).

Step 2: Reflect on the issues that arise when you attempt to address these two principles simultaneously.

Step 3: Generate a question that arises for your design from the intersection of the principles and write this on the sticky note.

Step 4: Consider how answering this question can refresh your design aims.

Optional Step: Now that you have articulated a challenging question, you can use the icons on the principle cards to identify relevant prompt cards. Reflect on children's experiences by using the 'Why?' prompt cards. Consider alternative approaches to the design of your product, and explore the ways design decisions shape possibilities for play using the 'What if...?' prompt cards. Plan ways to improve the features and functionality of your product with the 'How?' prompt cards. The Q&A playboard will help you record your ideas.



Watch the
animated guide





Playboard 5: Q&A

Throughout the design process we ask ourselves and our teams lots of questions to improve our products – Why? What if? How? Still, it can be useful for someone *outside* our context to challenge us to reflect on children's experiences, consider new approaches or identify the next steps. How might this Q&A session help you to improve your product?

Aim: Get the conversation going and generate debate. Remember, the best questions and answers often lead to more questions!

You will need: The prompt cards, sticky notes, pen and specific 'areas' for making notes that relate to different types of prompt in focus.

Instructions

Step 1: Select the prompt cards that relate to the Playful by Design principles you would like to focus on (using the icons on the principle cards as a guide).

Step 2: Sort the cards you have selected into piles according to the type of prompt (Why? What if...? How? and Wild Cards).

Step 3: Pick any type of prompt at random from any pile or choose one that appeals to you:

- **WHY?** cards will prompt you to focus your attention on player experiences.
- **WHAT IF...?** cards will prompt you to consider design alternatives.
- **HOW?** cards will prompt you to identify design options and translate your ideas into actions.
- **WILD CARDS** need to be paired with a prompt card. Pick one at random to uncover a new approach to tackling the prompt question.

You may decide to focus on only one type of prompt, or you may want to select one of each type. Whatever you decide, ensure you focus on one prompt at a time and give yourself sufficient time to reflect and respond.

Step 4: As you reflect on the prompts, note down your thoughts and responses in separate areas that relate to the focus of prompt. These can be created by using coloured paper (match the colour of the prompt card), printing out the playboard (see below) or using an online collaborative tool. If working as a team, these areas can be spaces to generate and collate new ideas. They can also support you in recording reflections and actions.

Step 5: Let the questions that arise as you reflect on the prompts feed into your design thinking, and identify the next steps in your process.

Optional Step: If you feel you are losing momentum, use the Wild Cards to take you off in a new direction! Also, if you create new prompts, please do share them with us...



Place your pile of Wild Cards here, face down (or if working online, ensure the top card is hidden from view)



Watch the animated guide

