

PAX Designed by David Masnato **PLAYGROUND**

 **2-4 Players**  **20 Mins**  **Ages 14+**

RULEBOOK

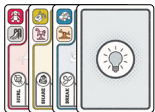
Making friends is hard.

It's especially hard when you're the new kid in town and you're not sure how to fit in. The neighborhood playground is bustling today. This is your big opportunity to prove yourself!

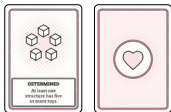
Can you navigate the politics of the playground while staying true to yourself?

It's playtime!

COMPONENTS



48 Imagination Cards



6 Identity Cards



30 Toy Cubes
(10 of each type)



1 Friendship
Bracelet Card



4 Structure Locations



1 Sandbox Location



1 Toy Bag



4 Backpack Screens

SETUP

Step 1: Put On Your Backpacks

Give each player a Backpack screen and choose a starting player by whatever means is the most fun for your group. Give that player the Friendship Bracelet card and place it in front of their Backpack screen.

Place all Toy cubes in the Toy bag. Beginning with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, each player randomly draws three Toy cubes from the bag and places them behind their Backpack screen.

Shuffle the Imagination deck and deal five cards to each player. Players may look at their cards but should keep them hidden from other players.

Shuffle the Identity cards and deal one to each player. Players may keep their Identity card face up behind their screen for their own reference during the game but should keep them hidden from other players.

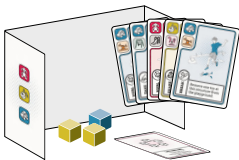


Fig. 1: Example backpack

Step 2: Go to the Playground

Find the five Location cards. Place the Slide, See Saw, Swings, and Rocking Horse cards in a central playing area with the Fort (🏰) side of each card face down. These are the Structure cards. Randomly draw three Toy cubes from the Toy bag and place them on a Structure. Repeat this process for each Structure card.



Fig 2: Structure Locations

Place the Sandbox card near the Structure cards. Do not place any Toy cubes on the Sandbox card during setup. The Sandbox is a Location, but it's not a Structure.

Draw two Imagination cards and place them face up near the Sandbox to form the Active Imagination display. Draw one Imagination card and place it face up near the Structure cards to form the Action pile. Place the remaining deck of cards face down near the Sandbox. When you've completed setup, your table should look like the illustration in Fig 3.



Fig 3: Playground setup

YOUR GOAL

The goal of *Pax Playground* is to make new friends while being true to yourself.

The game ends once one player has used the last Imagination card in their hand. When this occurs, play continues around the table until all players have had an equal number of turns. At this time, all players who have the same favorite Toy as the favorite Toy of the playground made new friends. All players who fulfilled the statement on their Identity card were true to themselves.

ON YOUR TURN...

You must perform one of three choices on your turn:

Love

Place an Imagination card from your hand face down in front of your Backpack screen. You may peek at cards you Loved at any time, but they must remain a secret to all other players.



Doll



Yo-yo



Car

Play

Place an Imagination card from your hand face up on the Action pile. The card you select must match the Toy or the Structure of the topmost card on the pile. Perform the action listed on the card at the Structure indicated on the card.

In the example in Fig 4, the player may use the Yo-yo card because the Structure on the card matches the Structure on the Action pile card.

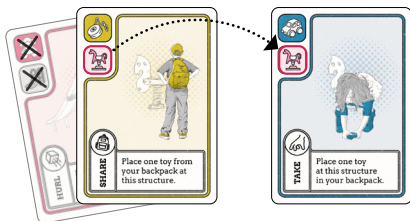


Fig 4: Playing a card to the Action pile with a matching Structure

Throw a Tantrum

Place one Toy cube from your Backpack on the Sandbox card. Next, place either of the two cards in the Active Imagination display on the Action pile and perform the action toy listed on the card at the Structure indicated on the card. When throwing a Tantrum, the Toy or Structure on your chosen card does not need to match the Toy or Structure on the topmost card of the Action pile.

Draw a new card from the Imagination deck to replenish the Active Imagination display up to two cards before ending your turn.

PLAYGROUND ACTIONS

Each Imagination card has an action that you must perform when you Play or throw a Tantrum. The only exception is if you are unable to perform the action because there are no Toy cubes in your Backpack or at the indicated Structure.

You may still use an Imagination card when you Play or throw a Tantrum even if you cannot perform the action listed on the card.

Playground Actions are always performed at the Structure indicated on the used Imagination card.



Children are often shy around new people. Players should not discuss their plans or intentions publicly.



Toy cubes represent physical toys. Imagination cards represent the toys you love or the actions you want to take depending on how they're used.

These are the four actions listed on the Imagination cards:



Take

Place one toy at this structure in your backpack.



Share

Place one toy from your backpack at this structure.



Hurl

Move one toy at this structure to a different structure.



Break

Remove one toy at this structure from the playground.
Return broken toys to the Toy bag.



Remember!

The Sandbox is not a Structure!

CONSTRUCTING A FORT

If at any time during the game a Structure card has no Toy cubes on it, it's immediately flipped over to the Fort side.

Once a Fort has been constructed, it remains constructed for the duration of the game regardless of how many Toy cubes are on it.

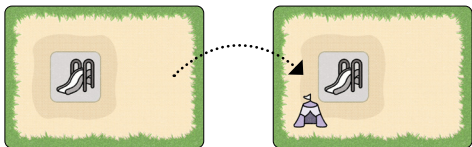


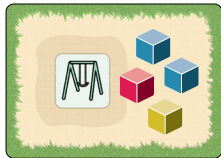
Fig 5: The Slide Location is flipped to the Fort side

THE FAVORITE TOY OF THE PLAYGROUND

When one player has used their last card, play continues around the table until the player with the Friendship Bracelet is reached and all players have had an equal number of turns.

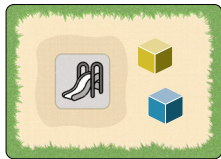
The game has ended. It's time to see what the favorite Toy of the playground is!

For each Location card count how many Toy cubes of each type are on the card. The Toy type with the most cubes on the card is the favorite Toy of that Location. Repeat this process for each Location, including the Sandbox.



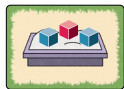
There are two Cars, one Doll, and one Yo-yo at the Swings. Cars are the favorite Toy of the Swings because it's the Toy type with the most cubes at this Location.

If there is a tie for the most cubes on a Location or a Location has no Toy cubes, that Location does not have a favorite Toy.



There's one Yo-yo and one Car at the Slide. There's no favorite Toy of the Slide because no Toy type has more cubes at this Location than any other Toy.

For each Toy type, count the number of Locations where it was the favorite Toy. If a Toy was favored at a Structure with a Fort, count that Location twice. The Toy that was favored at the most Locations is the favorite Toy of the playground. If there is a tie between Toy types favored at the most Locations, then there is no favorite Toy of the playground.



Cars were the favorite at three Locations. Dolls were the favorite at no Locations. Yo-yos were the favorite at one Location with a Fort so that Location is counted twice.

Cars are the favorite Toy of the playground.

ASSESS YOUR GOALS

The goal of *Pax Playground* is to make new friends while being true to yourself. It's possible for all players to accomplish both of these goals, but that might not always happen. It's also possible that players only accomplish one goal or no goals at all. That's ok! You can always come back to the playground another day!

DID YOU MAKE NEW FRIENDS?

Each player reveals the Toy cubes in their Backpack and the Imagination cards they Loved. Any Imagination cards remaining in players hands are discarded as they're no longer needed.

Count how many Toys of each type are represented by cubes in your Backpack and Loved Imagination cards. The Toy type with the most cubes and Loved Imagination cards is your favorite Toy. If your favorite Toy matches the favorite Toy of the playground, you made new friends.

If there's a tie between Toy types for your favorite Toy, then you do not have a favorite Toy. You do not make new friends if your favorite Toy doesn't match the favorite Toy of the playground, you do not have a favorite Toy, or there is no favorite Toy of the playground.



Between your Loved Toys and Toys in your backpack, Cars are represented twice. Dolls and Yo-yos are represented once.

Cars are your favorite Toy.

WERE YOU TRUE TO YOURSELF?

Each player must reveal their Identity card.
If the statement on your Identity card is true,
you were true to yourself.

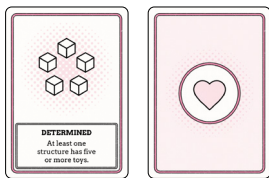


Fig 6: Identity Cards

I MADE NEW FRIENDS AND I WAS TRUE TO MYSELF.

DOES THAT MEAN I WON?

Achieving both goals means you made new friends and you were true to yourself.

I encourage you to consider what this means narratively instead of through a traditional win or loss lens, just like you would if you were a kid trying to make new friends at the playground.

THANK YOU

Pax Playground wouldn't be possible without the love and support of Leela, my parents, my sisters, and my friends.

And of course you!

PLAYTESTING

This game was playtested by members of the incredible Unpub, Break My Game, and Protospiel Online communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Icon Assets - Noun Project

Texture Assets - Spoon Graphics

Additional Graphics - Kenney

Photo References - Wikimedia Commons

Human Made Icon - Hinokodo



First Printing, 2026.