

# Frog Toss Play Set

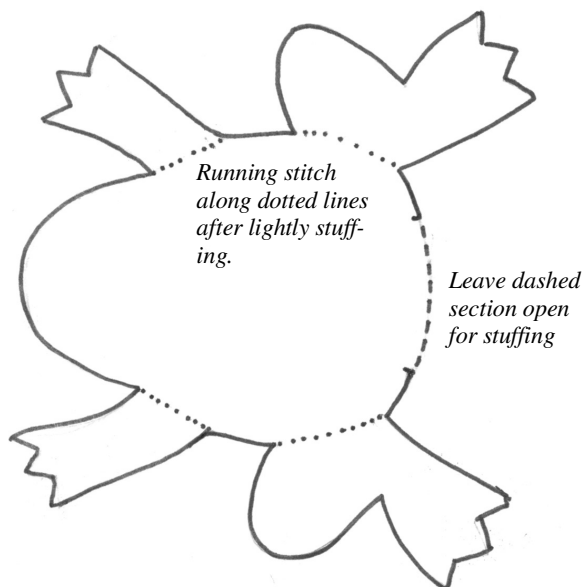
Pocket-sized frogs and a lilypad play mat make a portable gift and open-ended imaginative game for any little girl or boy.

Use the child's favorite colors, and mix-and-match for a fun, "scrappy" effect. If you're making a set for a "Princess" girl, be sure to include a few frogs with pinks and purples, as well as at least one "Prince" frog.

For *each frog*, you will need:

- two 4"x4" pieces of firmly-woven cotton or poly-cotton fabric (I like to mix a fun, small print with a coordinating or contrasting solid)
- A small amount of poly-fill stuffing (a little wad smaller than an egg)
- Harmonizing thread
- About 1 tablespoon of filler. Use tiny poly pellets for a hand-washable, air-dry frog, or rice/flax or lentils if you're pretty sure the frogs will not be a chew toy.
- A chopstick or other fine, blunt point.
- A small funnel

With any small, complex shape, it's far easier to work with a larger block of fabric than to cut intricate shapes



accurately. Trace and cut out the frog *template*. Stack your two frog swatches right sides together. With a sharp pencil, trace the frog template shape on the wrong side of the fabric stack.

Stitch with a small straight stitch by machine, leaving the turning section open. (If you wish to simplify the hands and feet, feel free to change the shape of the toes!)

Use sharp scissors to trim out the frog shape, being sure to snip down into the corners.

Press each frog, and turn it right sides out. It will be a little fiddly to get the arms and legs fully turned out. Press again.

Use the chopstick to softly stuff the arms and legs with a bit of poly-fill stuffing. Contain the stuffing by stitching across the arm and leg sections where they join the body, using small running stitches by hand and the harmonizing thread. (Bury your knots inside the frog.)

Insert the funnel into the opening, and add about 1 tablespoon of pellets or other "beanbag" filling material, like a mix of rice and flax seed, or lentils. You want enough to give some weight and mooshiness to the frog, but not a firm stuffing. For a frog this size, with poly-stuffed arms and legs and a "bean" middle, just less than 1 tablespoon of filler usually works well.

Close the opening with small whipstitches, very close together. Enjoy your frog set!

## Lilypad Playmat

Add dimension to the game with a round lilypad playmat to use as a target for tossing frogs.

If your interests run to painting, use plain, lightweight cloth and paint water and a lilypad in the middle. Follow any fabric setting instructions for your craft paint, to make sure the playmat is washable later.

If you prefer to sew the playmat, you will need:

- Two 14" diameter circles of fabric (perhaps a "wavy" blue print for water)
- One 10" diameter circle of lilypad fabric

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(green print, or pieced “scrappy” green prints to make a 10” square section, which you can cut to a circle.)

- 2 yards coordinating or contrasting ribbon, between 1/4” and 1/2” wide, if you’d like the mat to draw up into a storage pouch.

Stack the 14” circles right sides together and cut a gentle “wave” along the outside edge if desired (you can also leave them perfectly round.)

Choose one to be the outer side. Cut eight 2” sections of ribbon. Fold each in half, and pin the ribbons at even distances around the outer edge, with the folded edge of ribbon toward the center of the circle. (If you do not need the lilypad to double as a storage pouch, skip the ribbon step.)

Fold the 10” circle in half, and cut a very narrow wedge from the outer edge, toward the center. You may also choose to trim a “lobe” shape along the outer edge of the circle.

Unfold, and lay the lilypad right side up on the right side of the second 14” circle, centering it. Pin well.

Stitch around the outside edge of the lilypad, very close to the raw edge, then repeat with a medium-width zig-zag stitch (short stitch length) to cover the raw edge of the lilypad. You might also choose to use a straight stitch to outline the lilypad and create veins in the leaf.

Lay the outer and completed lilypad circles right sides together. Stitch around the outer edge with a 1/4” seam allowance, leaving a section about 2” long open for turning.

Be sure you catch each folded ribbon in your seam.

Press and trim the seams a bit. Turn right sides out and press again. Topstitch very close to the edge to close the opening and keep the mat smooth.

Thread the remaining ribbon through the ribbon loops; stitch through the ribbon and mat at the mid-point to prevent it pulling out. Draw up the ribbons to create a storage pouch for the frogs.

Pack your frog toss set in a small box or bin, or lidded pail; something to make storage compact and tidy.

You could add embellishments by embroidery or sewing on eyes (take care if using buttons or beads for eyes if there are very small children in the recipient’s household), or adding ribbon bows on the girl frogs.

Use textured fabrics (with a firm, tight weave) for frogs that stimulate as well as entertain.

Make as few or as many frogs as you like; three is a great starter number, but you could make multiple sets, or sets of five, etc, allowing for more children to play at one time.

Consider using a signature color, or adding an inked or sewn initial, to help differentiate between sibling’s frogs.

A single bean frog makes a fun addition to “Princess” dress-ups!

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