

THE MAMA FOUNDER BLUEPRINT

How I Built mamas play And What It Actually Takes to Build a Community Business

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Founder of mamas play

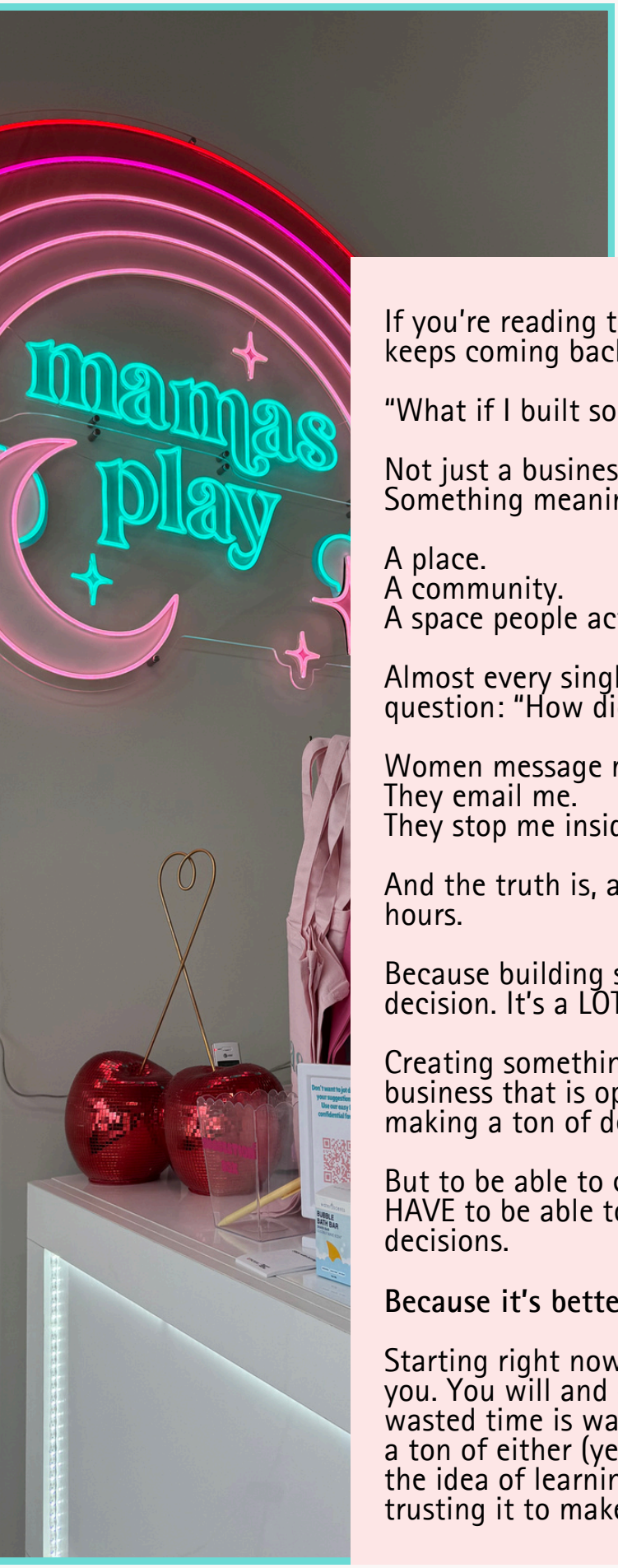
From idea to community.

"When women build things, communities change."

This is me in my office right before our grand opening. After more than two years of late nights, working in pajamas after bedtime, and figuring it out as I went, this moment finally became real. The end result came from a whole lot of hard work — and saying YES no matter what.

A Letter From Me





"Building something meaningful isn't one decision. It's a thousand."

If you're reading this, you've probably had a thought that keeps coming back to you.

"What if I built something?"

Not just a business.
Something meaningful.

A place.
A community.
A space people actually care about.

Almost every single day someone asks me the same question: "How did you build mamas play?"

Women message me.
They email me.
They stop me inside the space while their kids are playing.

And the truth is, answering that question properly takes hours.

Because building something like mamas play isn't just one decision. It's a LOT.

Creating something as massive as a brick and mortar business that is open daily with a staff comes from making a ton of decisions fast and sometimes with fear.

But to be able to carry an idea to the finish line, you HAVE to be able to trust your instinct and make quick decisions.

Because it's better to be done that perfect.

Starting right now, remember that motto and carry it with you. You will and can get hung up on a LOT of things, but wasted time is wasted money. As a mama, you don't have a ton of either (yet!). So right now, get comfortable with the idea of learning to get in tune with your instinct and trusting it to make decisions for you.



"Building
something meaningful
isn't one decision.
It's a thousand."

It's a thousand decisions.

Risk.
Leadership.
Money.
Design.
Community.
Belief in something before anyone else can see it.

So instead of answering that question over and over again, I decided to write everything down.

Not the Instagram version.
The real version.

This guide shares the mindset, lessons, and frameworks behind building a community business from the ground up.

My hope is that it helps you think bigger about what you could build too.

Because when women build things, communities change. How people parent change. But most importantly, YOU will change; you'll have tapped into your creative expression and when women create, the world gets better.

Ask yourself: what am I being called to do? Get clear on what you want to create and honor the inner restlessness in you; you are being called for a reason!

Write down below in a few sentences what your calling is:

My Story

Before mamas play existed, I was becoming a mother and navigating one of the most difficult chapters of my life.

When I was twenty weeks pregnant with my son Leo, my father Giuseppe died by suicide. That loss changed everything.

A few months later Leo was born on December 21, 2019. Shortly after that, the pandemic shut the world down.

Mothers everywhere were isolated. No support. No community. No places to gather. I didn't realize it at the time, but my devastating experience was the beginning of something blooming inside me.

What experiences or experiences have you had that brought you here today? Write it below:



'Mothers need community just as much as children need play.'

I experienced postpartum depression during that time, and so did many women around me. But when you go through hardship, you start noticing what the world is missing. What I noticed was this:
Mothers need community just as much as children need play. There were places where kids could run around. But very few spaces where mothers actually felt comfortable being there too. And NONE focused on mamas at all.

I started imagining a place where both could exist. A place where kids could play safely. And where moms could breathe. That idea eventually became mamas play. The play cafe industry already exists; I took an already successful business model but I flipped it to make it startegically different than the rest. Focus on moms. Cool design (because kids play anywhere - why must everything be primary colors?!). I took every pain point from other spaces and literally did the opposite in mine. Intentionally and through experience and research, I created a newer, better, more niche space that doesn't compare to the rest - it stands alone.

Think about what you want to create - how will yours be different? Have you done the research and found a problem in your community that you could solve?
Literally look at the nagative reviews of your competitors and see how you can fix a problem in your community. Write it below:



"Mothers need community just as much as children need play."

“The playground is not the business.
The community is the business.”

mamas play

What mamas play Actually Is





When people first walk into mamas play, they often think it's simply an indoor playground. But that's not really what it is. mamas play is a community ecosystem. The play structure is just one part of the experience. The business actually works because of the ecosystem around it. Open play introduces families to the space. But it is only a small percentage of our revenue. Here is where you need to think about what your space will offer.
I chose to have **MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS.** In NJ - a state with four seasons - I could never rely on foot traffic alone. I had to diversify my revenue so I had many revenue streams coming in each month in order to cover expenses and bring home a profit.

I offer:
-Open play (expose people to our space so they will become a member and book a party with us)
-Birthday Parties (4 simple packages)
-Memberships (recurring revenue with 3 tiers priced well)
-Retail (always have thing available for purchase you can mark up)
-Events (these can be set or setup as needed - they are FUN!)
-Classes, workshops, support groups (these are FREE but people always end up buying an open play pass or coffee
-Coffee bar (no way I would open without serving coffee)



What I am telling you is extremely valuable and is how you will keep your business alive for years and never going in the red or even breaking even. You MUST have **multiple revenue streams.** You cannot hope the one thing will be enough to keep your business going. In 2026, there is too much competition (not that we worry about the competetition - bc we don't! More on that later) for everything so we have to make sure we offer enough at our space to cover our expenses. For me, my goal was to help moms. Personally, it's my dream and passion. Professionally? I would never dream of charging for that. So I make sure my business bills get paid by offering services that people will pay to keep my doors open so that I can keep helping mamas. Together, this diverse business model paired with the **kind and positive energy** I promote in my ecosystem, my business after year one was a success.

Memberships create recurring relationships with customers. Birthday parties bring celebration and new families. Events create deeper connections. Retail adds discovery and fun. Coffee creates a caffeinated experience for moms and dads. The playground is not the business. The community is the business. I intentionally offer that community a lot so that all needs are met at mamas play.

The Revenue Truth

Open play = visibility + customer acquisition

Memberships = recurring revenue

Birthday parties = biggest profit driver

Coffee = experience enhancer

Retail = add-on spend

Events = community deepener + repeat visits

What I Do vs. What I Delegate

I Handle:

- Brand vision
- Marketing
- Community
- Relationships
- Content
- Big decisions
- Customer experience
- Standards

My Team Handles:

- Daily operations
- Coffee bar
- Check-ins
- Party setup
- Cleaning
- Inventory
- Playroom flow
- Customer support

What will you be selling? Look at what you want to offer and look at other spaces like yours. What else are they selling? What can you add?
I personally don't love birthday parties or planning and design. But I knew that once I opened, I would delegate that to my staff so that **my energy would be focosued on what I love and am good at**: being with people. My entire career was marketing and PR so I knew how to develop a business and knew how to manage a team. That would be easy and fun for me. But coffee? Kids parties? Balloons? Inventory? Scheduling? None of that was my wheelhouse - nor did I want it to be. So I would delegate tasks that I did not want and fcoused on what I wanted. I also made sure my negative energy toward and lack of experience with those things was kept away; I only worked on what I wanted to and was happy to do and good at it, and made sure from opening that other tasks would be handled by my manager and staff. I never wanted to be a business owner that "wore all the hats" and "did it all alone" - why? I gladly delegate and believe no one should do everything themselves. **That chaotic energy will leak into everything you do,** so make sure you get clear on exactly what you will and will NOT be doing in your business. Create for yourself a list of tasks for your and your staff from the beginning and hire accordingly!



The Moment I Realized This Was Real

I'll bring in a few new toys or little things for the space, and Leo and I run around playing hide and seek under the neon glow with the big lights turned off.
The whole place feels like this magical little world that only we know about.
And every once in a while I stop and look around and think:
Wow. I actually built this. I built a play space where my own son gets to grow up. Where I can bring my friends and family and host play dates on evenings after hours. Where moms laugh together and kids run around like they own the place while I make friends with them and their kids with mine.
And the best part? I'm still with my boys every single day. I work part-time. I delegate the day-to-day operations. I drop-off and pick Leo up from school. Late afternoons, evenings and weekends are ours. It's honestly a dream.

I knew from the beginning **I was done with: working for men, working full-time, working without passion, working alone**. I am a people person and I love popping into my office to work with my team, engage with my customers, then leave my staff empowered to run my business . I never wanted to be chained to my business. I wanted the freedom to travel for weeks without worrying the place will collapse without me. So from the very beginning, **I made sure everything I did, what I read, the content I consumed, it all helped get me to that goal.**

What are you reading? What does your algorithm show in your feed? How do you want your future to look? Ask yourself this every day and adjust accordingly so that you aren't weighed down with any distractions. Don't share what you're doing with negative people who will only have negative things to say. Don't take advice from anyone that doesn't have the life/business you wan't. Unfollow accounts that focus on complaining, or that make you feel not good. Only hang out with either friends who parent like you do or who are great at business. I let Love is Blind go for books about money. I stepped back from friendships where their parenting didn't align with mine because I want to make sure me and my kid were with peers on our level.
I started going to female networking groups and was so shocked to see how many mamas were successfully running a business and parenting presently like how I wanted, and I started talking to them.
Most importantly, **I hired a coach**
Then another, then another. I learned from those who already dit it.

"I actually built this."



What People Think It Takes vs What It Actually Takes

What people see





What it actually takes

People see the finished version of a business.
They see the beautiful space. The photos. The happy customers.
What they don't usually see are the hundreds of decisions behind it. Building something like this requires:
Vision
Risk tolerance
Creativity
Leadership
Resilience

You will doubt yourself.
You will question decisions.
You will worry about money.
You will have moments where you wonder if you're crazy for trying.

And then you will have moments where you realize you're building something meaningful.

That's entrepreneurship. Highs and lows, self-doubt then pride for your passion. But for me, and for you, this NOT happening will never be an option.



As soon as I was clear on what I wanted to do, I hired a local business coach. We met at a coffee shop in Boonton, NJ and I sat on a couch with her, my idea, and a rough draft of my business plan. I told I wanted to do this, and was hoping to be this, and dreamed it would be that, and then she stopped me. She said, "from this moment, tell yourself you ARE an entrepreneur.

You ARE currently creating mamas play. You WILL build this business and it will be everything you dreamed of. Speak it into existence!" When she said that to me, something just clicked inside of me. It felt so right, and it validated my decision: I AM doing this! I believed it was going to happen and from that meeting forward, everything I did was with the end goal in mind. There was no let me see how this next thing goes, or let me ask a fewn more people this, NO. This idea of yours WILL happen when you choose to believe it will. It was almost like Gabby - my business coach (whose info will be linked at the end of this blueprint) - gave me permission I didn't know I needed to dive into this.

So let me give you permission now: you absolutely CAN build whatever you dream. You have to believe it and then take action towards it every single day. Even when you have doubts. Even when you're scared. Even when a hater says something negative. Espcecially when you hear something negative from a hater! Because I guarantee that person will be watching all your business instagram stories years later filled with jealousy and regret because they watched you do and become everything they never had the courage to be and do.

How I Actually Built mamas play

People often assume businesses are built in one big moment.

They're not.

They're built through a series of decisions that slowly bring an idea into reality.

When I look back at the journey of building mamas play, there were a handful of key stages that turned the concept into something real.

Step 1. Seeing the Gap

Before you build anything meaningful, you have to notice what's missing.

For me, the gap was clear.

Mothers needed a place to gather.

There were plenty of play spaces designed purely for kids.

But there were very few spaces designed for moms and kids together.

I imagined a place where:
Kids could play safely.
Moms could relax, connect, and actually enjoy being there.

That vision became the foundation of everything that followed.

Step 2 — Designing the Experience

Before thinking about logistics, I focused on the experience.

What should people feel when they walk in?
Comfort.
Energy.
Joy.
A sense of belonging.

That's why the design matters so much.

Lighting.
Music.
Colors.
Seating.
Layout.

Every detail contributes to how people feel inside a space.
When people feel good in a space, they come back.

Step 3 — Building the Ecosystem

A successful community business cannot rely on just one source of revenue.
It needs an ecosystem.

For mamas play, that ecosystem includes:

- Open play
- Memberships
- Birthday parties
- Events
- Classes
- Retail
- Coffee

Each piece strengthens the others.

Families come for open play.
They return through memberships.
They celebrate birthdays.
They attend events.

Over time, the space becomes part of their lives.

Step 4 — Opening the Doors

Launching a business is both exciting and terrifying.
You've spent months or years imagining something.

Then suddenly it's real.

Customers walk in.
They experience the space.
They form opinions.

That moment requires courage.
But it's also the moment where the vision finally becomes real.

Step 5 — Letting Community Grow

The most beautiful thing about community businesses is that they eventually become bigger than the founder.

People build relationships.
Families return week after week.
Children grow up visiting the space.

At that point the business becomes part of the fabric of the community.
That's when you know you built something meaningful.

The Real Cost And What It Gave Me

Let's talk about money.

Not the Instagram version of entrepreneurship.
The real version.

Because if you're thinking about opening a brick-and-mortar business, one of the questions you probably have is:
"*Okay... but how much did this actually cost?*"

So I'm going to tell you.
I invested approximately **$300,000** all-in to build mamas play.

That number can feel big. Because it is.
But I want to break it down so you can understand where that money actually went and more importantly, what it created.

About $100,000: The Play Structure

Approximately **$100,000 went toward our custom Tigerplay play structure.**

And when I say custom, I mean CUSTOM.
This wasn't something I clicked "add to cart" on and had delivered to New Jersey.
I worked hands-on with the Tigerplay team for months during the design process.
Their team traveled overseas from Europe, stayed here for weeks during installation, installed the structure themselves, and continued supporting me with maintenance and other needs afterward.

It was a massive investment.
But I knew the play structure was going to be one of the most important pieces of the experience I was creating.

I wasn't trying to build just another indoor playground.
I wanted to build something people would walk into and immediately think: **"Wow."**
And that meant being willing to invest in the things that made my vision different.

Approximately $200,000: Everything Else

The other approximately **$200,000 went into everything required to turn an empty commercial space into mamas play.**

And when I say everything, I mean EVERYTHING.
Furniture.
Lighting.
Decor.
Technology.
Signage.
Equipment.
Fixtures.
Supplies.
Construction.
Design elements.
Little details.
Big details.

I sourced things from everywhere — HomeGoods, Amazon, specialty vendors, custom manufacturers, local businesses and more.

Some things were inexpensive.
Some things were absolutely not.
And I made plenty of decisions based on where I thought spending more would actually improve the customer experience.

The Things I Chose to Splurge On

One of those decisions was our coffee bar.
And yes, I bought the expensive commercial **La Marzocco espresso machine.**

Could I have bought something cheaper?
Absolutely.
But I didn't want to serve mediocre coffee.
I wanted genuinely great coffee because mamas play was never supposed to feel like a traditional kids' play place.
The moms mattered too.

I wanted a mom to be able to sit down, order a really good latte, take a breath, chat with another mom, and actually enjoy being there while her child played.
That decision says a lot about how I built this business.

I wasn't just asking:
"What do I need to open?"
I was asking:
"What experience do I want people to have when they walk through these doors?"
And sometimes creating that experience meant spending more intentionally.

So... Was It Worth It?

This is where the conversation gets really interesting.
Because I didn't spend approximately $300,000 just to own a beautiful play space.

I invested approximately $300,000 to build a business and a life.
Today, mamas play generates **more than a quarter-million dollars in annual revenue.**

The business pays its staff.
It pays its operating expenses.

And it has essentially created an incredibly flexible, part-time job for me — where I work for myself.

And honestly?
That flexibility is one of the biggest returns on my investment.
I can show up for my son.
I can bring my children to work.
I can structure my schedule around my family instead of asking an employer for permission.
I can build my work around my life — instead of building my life around someone else's work schedule.

That was always the dream.
I didn't build mamas play because I wanted to work 80 hours a week.
I built it because I wanted to create something meaningful and create a life that worked for my family.
And that distinction matters.

My Income Matters to Me

I also want to be really honest about something that doesn't always get talked about when women discuss motherhood and entrepreneurship:
Having my own income has always been incredibly important to me.

My business has helped pay for family vacations, bills, my hair, my nails, my clothes, and the things I want for myself.
I have never wanted to have to ask a man for money to take care of myself.
There is something incredibly powerful about knowing that you can provide for yourself.

That you can make your own money.
That you can make decisions with your own income.
That you don't have to wait for someone else to say yes.

For me, entrepreneurship isn't just about revenue.
It's about independence.
It's about knowing that I created something that can support me.
It's about having choices.
And it's about being able to say:
I built this.

The Return on Investment Isn't Just Financial

If you only look at my approximately $300,000 investment and compare it to annual revenue, you're missing the bigger picture.
Because the return isn't only financial.

The return is:
Freedom.
Independence.
Flexibility.
Income.
Time with my children.
Creative expression.
Ownership.
Confidence.
Empowerment.

I built a business that gives me the ability to be present for my family while still having something that is completely mine.
That, to me, is priceless.

And Yes, Entrepreneurship Is Hard.

I don't want you reading this and thinking I'm telling you entrepreneurship is easy.
It isn't.
There are stressful days.
There are expensive mistakes.
There are payrolls to make.
Bills to pay.
Problems to solve.
Decisions that keep you awake at night.

There are moments when you wonder if you're absolutely insane for taking the risk.
I've had those moments too.
But I've also learned something about myself through all of it:
I can handle it.
I was meant for this.
And if you're a mama sitting there thinking about the thing you want to build, I want you to know that you don't have to be fearless.

You just have to be willing to move forward even when you're scared.
You have to be willing to learn.
You have to be willing to make decisions.
You have to be willing to invest in yourself.
And you have to believe that the life you're trying to create is worth building.

Because sometimes the biggest return isn't the number in your bank account.
Sometimes it's being able to look at the life you've created and say:
"This is mine. I built this. And I built it around the life I actually wanted."
That's the kind of entrepreneurship I believe in.
Not building a business that owns you.
Building a business that gives you freedom to live.
And that is one of the greatest gifts mamas play has ever given me.

The 12 Real Decisions That Built mamas play

“Businesses are built through decisions.”

When people look at a finished business, they often assume the success came from one big breakthrough moment.

The truth is much simpler.
Businesses are built through a series of decisions.

Some are big.
Some feel small at the time.

But over months and years, those decisions shape everything.
Here are twelve decisions that played a major role in building mamas play.

Decision 1 — Choosing to Solve a Real Problem

The strongest businesses begin with a real need.

For me, the problem was clear.

Mothers were isolated.

Families needed places to gather.

Kids needed places to play.

But moms needed spaces designed for them too.

The decision to solve that problem became the foundation of the entire business.

Decision 2 — Designing the Space for Moms, Not Just Kids

Many play spaces focus entirely on children.

I wanted something different.

Comfortable seating.
A coffee bar.
Aesthetic design.

Details that make mothers feel like the space is meant for them too.

When moms enjoy the environment, they stay longer and come back more often.

Decision 3 — Building a Brand With Personality

Branding is not just logos and colors.

It's the personality of the space.

The vibe.

The energy.

The small details that make the place memorable.

mamas play was designed to feel fun, welcoming, and a little bit magical.

Those details matter more than most people realize.

Decision 4 — Creating an Experience, Not Just a Service

People don't remember transactions.

They remember experiences.

The way a place feels.

The conversations they had there.

The memories they made with their kids.

The goal was always to create an experience families would want to return to.

Decision 5 — Building Multiple Revenue Streams

Community spaces need multiple ways to generate income.

Open play introduces families.

Memberships create recurring relationships.

Birthday parties bring celebrations.

Events create connection.

Retail and coffee enhance the experience.

Together they form a sustainable ecosystem.

Decision 6 — Listening to the Community

One of the most powerful sources of insight is simply listening to your customers.

What do they enjoy?

What do they wish existed?

What makes their lives easier?

The businesses that grow are the ones that evolve with their community.

Decision 7 — Investing in Atmosphere

Atmosphere is invisible but powerful.

Lighting.

Music.

Colors.

Layout.

All of these details influence how people feel in a space.

When people feel comfortable and happy, they stay longer and return more often.

Decision 8 — Allowing the Space to Evolve

No business is perfect from the beginning.

Spaces grow and evolve over time.

New ideas appear.

Customer needs change.

Remaining flexible allows the business to continue improving.

Decision 9 — Building Relationships With Families

Community businesses thrive on relationships.

Families return when they feel welcomed and recognized.

The strongest communities are built through genuine connections.

Decision 10 — Delegating Responsibilities

Founders cannot do everything themselves.

Building a capable team allows the business to run smoothly while the founder focuses on leadership and growth.

Delegation also protects the founder's time and energy.

Decision 11 — Trusting Intuition

Entrepreneurship requires constant decision-making.

Data helps.

Advice helps.

But intuition often plays an important role.

Trusting your instincts can guide you when there is no clear answer.

Decision 12 — Staying Connected to the Mission

The purpose of mamas play was always bigger than the business itself.

It was about creating a place where families feel welcomed, supported, and connected.

When decisions align with the mission, the business grows in the right direction.

Final Thought

Businesses are not built overnight.

They are built through consistent decisions made over time.

Some decisions will feel uncertain.
Some will turn out better than expected.

But when those decisions are guided by purpose and vision, they gradually create something meaningful.

That is the process of building a community business.

My Offer Ladder

1. Someone discovers us on Instagram
2. They come for open play
3. They buy coffee/snacks
4. Their kid loves it
5. They come back
6. They become a member
7. They book a birthday party
8. They tell their friends
9. They attend events
10. They become part of the culture

What I Would Never Do Again

Overstaff before revenue supported it

Spend emotionally because I was overwhelmed

Assume foot traffic alone could carry the business

Wait too long to simplify packages

Underprice anything that required labor

Create systems only after things got chaotic

Let fear make decisions for me

How Community Businesses Actually Make Money

Many people assume community spaces only make money from one source.

But the truth is, successful community businesses operate through multiple interconnected revenue streams.

This is what creates stability and sustainability.

Open Play

Open play introduces new families to the space.

It allows people to experience the environment before committing to anything long term.

It also creates daily activity inside the space.

Memberships

Memberships are one of the most powerful parts of a community business.

They create recurring relationships with customers.

Members feel like they belong. They return frequently and become part of the culture of the space.

Birthday Parties

Celebrations bring excitement and introduce new families.

Birthday parties are often a family's first experience with a space like mamas play.

From there, many become repeat customers.

Events and Classes

Events deepen the community experience.

They give families reasons to return for something new.

Workshops, classes, and gatherings create connection beyond playtime.

Retail

Retail allows customers to bring a piece of the experience home with them.

It also supports local vendors and small businesses.

Food and Beverage

Coffee and snacks create comfort.

They give parents a reason to relax while their children play.

This small detail makes the space more enjoyable and increases the time people spend there.

When all of these elements work together, they create a strong and sustainable ecosystem.

What I Would Do If I Had to Start Over

Every founder learns lessons along the way.
Some lessons come from success.
Others come from mistakes.

If I had to start over again, there are several things I would approach differently.
I Would Trust My Vision Earlier
When you have a strong idea, it's easy to doubt yourself.

You wonder if people will understand it.
But often your instincts are stronger than your fears.
I Would Focus Even More on Community

Businesses succeed when people feel
emotionally connected to them.
The stronger the community, the stronger the
business.

I Would Protect My Time From the Beginning
Founders often feel pressure to do everything
themselves.

But that approach leads to burnout.

Delegation is essential.

Building the right team allows the founder to focus on vision and leadership.

I Would Embrace Imperfection
Waiting for everything to be perfect can slow progress.
Sometimes the best way to learn is simply to begin.
Momentum builds clarity.

I Would Remember the Bigger Purpose
At the end of the day, businesses are about people.

Spaces like mamas play exist to bring families together.
Keeping that mission in focus helps guide every decision.



Why Aesthetic Makes Money

Moms take photos when a space is beautiful

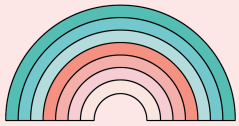
Photos become free marketing

Beautiful design increases perceived value

Perceived value supports higher pricing

Comfort keeps adults there longer

Adult experience matters because adults are the buyers



Lessons I Learned Building mamas play

- Community is everything.
- Delegation is freedom.
- Design matters more than people think.
- Authenticity attracts the right people.
- Moms deserve beautiful spaces too.
- Small details create big impressions.
- Leadership means making decisions even when you're unsure.
- Consistency builds trust.
- Not everyone will understand your vision.
- Experiences matter more than transactions.

My Hiring Non-Negotiables

Must be:

- warm
- proactive
- good with moms
- calm with kids
- clean without being asked
- not glued to their phone
- able to talk to customers
- able to handle feedback
- aligned with the vibe

I can train coffee. I can train check-in. I can train cleaning.
I cannot train someone to care.

I pay them well, offer unlimited time off, flexible scheduling, and let them bring their kids when needed.
Because a good staff is PRICELESS.

Mistakes that cost me money

Buying things before proving demand

Not having tight enough systems early

Spending too much time on low-profit tasks

Underestimating how much cleaning/reset labor parties require

Not simplifying offers sooner

Letting perfection slow down revenue

"I hire for personality,
not experience."

mamas play

Hiring and Building a Team



The Freedom Math

A business only gives you freedom if:

- it has recurring revenue
- it has high-ticket offers
- it has trained staff
- it has repeatable systems
- it does not depend on the founder being
- physically present every day

If the business only works when you are there,
you did not build a business.
You built yourself a job.

One of the most important lessons I learned building mamas play is that the people running the space shape the entire experience.
Customers may come for the play area.
But they stay because of how they feel.
And that feeling is created by the team.

When I hire, I do something that surprises people.
I hire for personality, not experience.
Skills can be taught. Systems can be learned.
But personality and energy are much harder to train.

I look for people who are:
Warm
Positive
Responsible
Kind with children
Comfortable talking with parents



Once someone has the right attitude,
everything else can be trained.
And training matters.
When someone joins the team, we train.
Then we train again.
Then we train some more.

Consistency creates a better experience for customers and a stronger team culture.
Over time, the team becomes the heartbeat of the space.
When the team believes in the mission, the community feels it.

My Tech Stack

Website: Wix

POS: Square

Scheduling / bookings: Acuity

Design: Canva

Email: Google Workspace

Social: Instagram / TikTok/ FB (for the groups)

Payroll: ADP

Internal planning: Google Drive / Docs

I gave access to my assistant I hired once I was open



Designing a Space People Love



One of the most overlooked parts of building a community business is experience design. People don't just visit spaces. They experience them.

Everything contributes to that experience:
Lighting
Music
Color
Comfort
Layout
Energy

When someone walks into a space and feels welcomed, relaxed, and inspired, they come back. That feeling is intentional.

Mentors, Coaches, and Learning

Every founder benefits from learning.

That learning can come from:

- Mentors
- Coaches
- Business communities
- Networking groups
- Books
- Courses

The goal is not to copy someone else's path.
The goal is to expand your thinking and gain new perspectives.

Networking and Community Partnerships

Community businesses grow through relationships.

Local partnerships can include:

- Local instructors
- Service providers
- Small businesses
- Community organizations

These relationships strengthen the ecosystem around your business.

Mistakes I Made

Every founder makes mistakes.

Some decisions will not work out the way you expected.
Some ideas will fail.

Mistakes are not signs of failure.
They are part of learning and growth.
What matters is the ability to adapt and move forward.

Protecting Your Time as a Founder

A successful business should support your life, not consume it.

Founders need time for:

- Family
- Health
- Creativity
- Rest

Protecting your time allows you to continue leading the business with clarity and energy.

The Mama Founder Mindset

If you are thinking about building something meaningful, remember:
You don't need permission.
You don't need to have everything figured out.
But you do need courage.
You need resilience.

And you need a genuine desire to serve your community.
Community businesses succeed when founders truly care about the experience people have.



"A business should support your life.
Not consume it."

mamas play

Designing a Business That Supports Your Life



One of the biggest misconceptions about entrepreneurship is that building a business means sacrificing your life.
Many founders believe they must work constantly to make something successful.

But over time I realized something important.
A business should support your life.

Not consume it.

When I built mamas play, my vision wasn't just about creating a place for families.
It was also about creating a life that felt meaningful and balanced.
I wanted to build something that allowed me to be present for my family.

To pick Leo up from school.
To spend evenings and weekends together.
To enjoy time with my husband Steve.

That meant making intentional decisions about how the business operates.

Delegating responsibilities.
Hiring the right team.
Building systems that allow the space to run smoothly even when I'm not there.
A founder does not need to be present for every moment of the business.

Leadership is about vision and direction.
The team brings that vision to life day by day.



One of my favorite moments happens when I stop by mamas play
in the evening with Steve and Leo.
The lights are low, the space is quiet, and Leo runs around
playing under the neon glow.

In those moments I sometimes pause and think:
This place exists because I believed in an idea.
And now my son gets to grow up around it.

That realization reminds me why I built mamas play in the first place.

Not just to run a business.
But to create a life that feels meaningful.

Entrepreneurship can absolutely be challenging.
But when it's built with intention, it can also create freedom.
And that freedom allows you to spend your time on what matters most.

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The Mama Founder Starter Plan

How to Actually Start Building This

Let's be clear about something.
You do not need to have everything figured out to start.
You do not need a perfect business plan.
You do not need a fully designed space.
You do not need a massive budget.
What you do need is movement.
This is the exact framework I would follow if I had to start over again from scratch.

Step 1 — Define the Gap

Every strong business starts the same way.
You notice what's missing.
For me, it was obvious:
Mothers had places for their kids to play.
But they didn't have spaces where they actually wanted to be.
That was the gap.

Your job is to answer this:
What is missing in your community?
Not what sounds cute.
Not what's trending.
What do people actually need?
If you're not sure, do this:

- Talk to 10 moms
- Ask where they go now
- Ask what they wish existed

Patterns will show up fast.
That's your starting point.

Step 2 — Build a Simple Revenue Plan

This is where most people get it wrong.
They focus on the idea.
But the business only works if it makes money.
Here's the reality:
Not all revenue streams are equal.

For a space like mamas play:

- **Open play** brings people in
- **Memberships** create consistency
- **Birthday parties** drive the most profit
- **Events** bring people back
- **Retail + coffee** increase spend

If I were starting again, I would focus on this first:
"How will this business make money immediately?"
Not someday.
Not after everything is perfect.
Immediately.
Because cash flow gives you freedom to build.

Step 3 — Stop Overcomplicating the Start

You do not need:

- A perfect logo
- A full build-out
- Every detail planned

What you do need:

- A clear concept
- A space (even if it's temporary or small)
- A way for people to show up

The biggest mistake people make is waiting until everything feels "ready."
That moment never comes. You learn by doing.

Step 4 — Get Your First Customers

This part is simple. People just avoid it.
You need people in your space as fast as possible.

Here's how:

- Post consistently on Instagram
- Show the process (not just the finished version)
- Talk about what you're building
- Invite people in early

You can even offer:

- Founding memberships
- Early access pricing
- Small events before full launch

You don't need perfection.
You need **proof that people care.**

Step 5 — Focus on What Actually Makes Money

This is where most founders lose time.

They get caught in:

- small details
- aesthetic tweaks
- things that don't move revenue

If I could go back, I would focus faster on:

- Filling birthday party bookings
- Building membership base
- Creating repeat customers

Because that's what builds stability.
Everything else is secondary.

Step 6 — Expect Imperfection

You will make mistakes. Things will not go exactly how you planned.

Some ideas will work.
Some won't.

That's not failure.
That's the process.

The faster you move, the faster you learn.

Step 7 — Protect Your Time Early

If you try to do everything yourself, you will burn out.

You are not just building a business.
You are building a life.

That means:

- Hiring before you feel fully ready
- Delegating earlier than feels comfortable
- Letting go of control in small ways

The goal is not to be everywhere.
The goal is to build something that runs without you being everywhere.

Step 8 — Build Something People Feel

At the end of the day, this is what matters most.
People don't come back because of a play structure.

They come back because of how they feel.

- welcomed
- comfortable
- seen
- connected

That feeling is what creates loyalty.
And loyalty is what builds a real business.

Final Thought

You do not need permission to build something meaningful.
You do not need to be an expert.
You do not need to have it all figured out.

But you do need to start. Hire that coach. Attend that event. With each step builds momentum, and that momentum will grow and carry you through to the end.

Because every business that exists right now started the same way:
With one person deciding to move forward
before they felt ready.

That's what this really takes.

Final Thoughts



I completed the entire Play Cafe Academy course by Michele Caruana. I binged her content like Netflix. While everyone else was scrolling social media after their kids went to bed, I was building my business plan.

I listened to her Profitable Play Podcast while driving because my time was precious — and years later, I was invited on as a guest for what became one of her top 10 most-listened-to episodes.

Dedication and action got me here, but not without guidance from some of the best in the industry. I'm also a member of the private Playmakers Society Facebook group, which is exclusively for paid indoor play café owners or students actively building their businesses through Michele's course. That community was incredibly valuable during my early stages, and even now, over a year into operating mamas play, it continues to be a place where owners share real questions, real numbers, and real advice based on lived experience in this very specific industry.

If you're serious about opening an indoor play café, I highly recommend exploring Michele's resources. Whether it's her course, one-on-one coaching, podcast, or free content, the links are included below alongside other resources that helped me along the way.

A Final Word to Future Mama Founders

If you've made it this far, there's a good chance
you've felt the pull to build something of your own.

Maybe it's a space.
Maybe it's a program.
Maybe it's something completely different.

But the desire to create something meaningful is powerful.
Community businesses begin with one person who decides to bring people together.

One idea.
One vision.
One step at a time.

If you feel that calling, take it seriously.
The world needs more spaces where people feel welcomed, supported, and connected.

And sometimes those spaces start with a single person who simply decides to build them.

That is the work of a Mama Founder.

Final Checklist Before You Build

Before You Build, Answer This:

- What problem am I solving?
- Who is this for?
- How will this make money immediately?
- What is my highest-profit offer?
- What will people photograph/share?
- What will make people come back?
- What can I delegate?
- What systems do I need before opening?
- What am I willing to charge confidently?
- What kind of life do I want this business to support?

Here Is Who I worked With

Tell them Georganne
from mamas play sent you!

Gabby Borrero
No Plan B Consulting

Business Coach
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Helene Ebaum

My commercial realtor

Joe Mihalick
Signs for Today

Entreprenuer
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For my signage and vinyl installations.

Marie Paddington-Chivers
Tiger Play

marie@tigerplay.co.uk
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Marie from Tiger Play, whom I worked to help build our play structure from London.

La Marzocco

www.lamarzocco.com
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For our espresso machine

Aaron Beattie
Habitat Coffee

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For our coffee and setup

Michele Caruana | Play Cafe Academy

Indoor Playground Biz Expert

www.michelecaruana.com

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the-profitable-play-podcast

My affialiate links

Play Cafe Academy | Partner Program

Play Cafe Academy Business Plan Toolkit

Play Cafe Academy Mobile Event Toolkit

Mobile Event Toolkit (Landing Page)

Business Plan Toolkit (Landing Page)

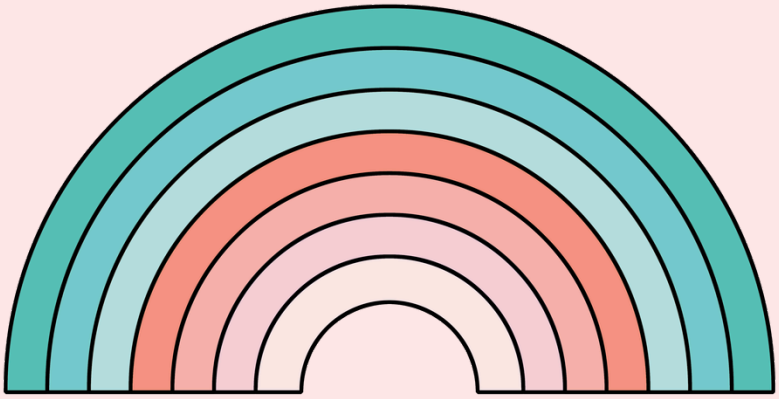
Book More Birthdays With Facebook Ads (For Challenge Participants)

Book More Birthdays With Facebook Ads (For NON-Challenge Participants)

[FREEBIE] Business Bundle

[FREEBIE] What's Working Guide

[FREEBIE] 2-Hour Funding Class



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