

Destination Imagination® Rising Stars!® Quick Start Guide

The Rising Stars! Challenge is made up of two parts. The Rising Stars! Team Challenge is designed to provide an open-ended activity worked on for several weeks in which the children will learn about the theme of the play and about making up a story, playing roles in a performance and creating costumes, background and props. The second part, The Rising Stars! Instant Challenge, gives the children the opportunity to work together as a team while solving a short, time-driven Challenge.

The Rising Stars! Team Challenge is an in-depth dramatization, sometimes taking weeks to complete. The open-ended Team Challenge promotes critical and creative thinking skills and team-building skills while honoring current educational standards. There is no one single solution to a Rising Stars! Team Challenge, nor is there one right solution. Each team of children will solve this Team Challenge in their own way. The results are often very exciting because all of this takes place in the rare spirit of total creative freedom.

A part of the Rising Stars! Team Challenge is the Team Choice Element. A Team Choice Element is an optional team creation that is a part of the Team Challenge Presentation and that encourages the children to share what they are most excited about as they have created their solution. These creations showcase each team's individual and collective interests, strengths and abilities. They could be a made-up song, a poem, a costume, a dance – whatever the children are most proud of in their play.

Approaching the Rising Stars! Team Challenge

Once you have spent some time team building and becoming acquainted with your team, make sure all of the members understand the rules for appropriate behavior. Then it's time to begin working on the Team Challenge. These ideas might take several weeks to accomplish. The role of the Team Manager is to do the following:

- First read the Challenge with the team and discuss what the words mean. Read a paragraph at a time. Talk about the specific tasks in the Challenge. What do they have to do? What things might they want to look at and research to help them learn more about this Challenge and to help them with their solution?
- Allow the team to take field trips to the library or partake in supervised internet research. Also, trips to local museums, parks, craft stores and hardware stores will inspire the team and help them visualize what their options are.
- Look at the Glossary of Terms stated in the Challenge. Discuss the words so the children understand their meaning.
- Look at the Starry Showcase Form. This shows a checklist with the particular requirements for the Challenge.
- Discuss the requirements for the things that should be included in their performance. Ask questions to get the team started. Ask the children to elaborate on their ideas. Write down every idea the children discuss so that they're not lost. Discuss the most promising ideas with the children, and ways they might accomplish them.
- Discuss characters and costumes. Discuss possible settings and props. Provide needed materials and help the children design solutions and teach them multiple ways to solve construction problems that arise.

- Allow the Children to work on different aspects of their solution. Some may be interested in working on props while others would rather work on the script. It is fine to allow them the opportunity to do different things. In fact, it is encouraged. Delegating tasks is a mark of well-rounded and productive teams.
- Discuss possible Team Choice Elements. What talents do the children demonstrate? Generate a list of options they might like to consider. Work with them to decide which ideas will fit best with their Team Challenge solution.

The Rising Stars! Instant Challenge is a quick activity on which the children work for about ten minutes. Instant Challenges allow children the opportunity to listen to the directions, think of a plan or strategy, discuss their thoughts with their team, analyze which options might work the best and design and carry out a plan of action. It also helps them to learn to evaluate their ideas after they have completed their Instant Challenge.

Approaching the Rising Stars! Instant Challenges

Instant Challenges are a way to help the children to learn to work well together as a team and to think quickly and efficiently. Practicing Instant Challenges is a great way to engage the children during every team meeting, as well as to teach listening skills and cooperation. Instant Challenges should be done with the following process:

- Gather the materials needed. Most items are common, household items. Some Instant Challenges may need to be set up or have areas taped off ahead of time.
- Read the Instant Challenge to the children.
- Next, set the timer for an exact amount of time in which the team can cooperatively work on building and creating of their solution. There might be another time in which the children present their solution.
- After the children have presented their solution, they should talk over their solution. Discuss and analyze what worked and what areas could have been improved.

How Much Should the Adults do for the Children?

There are few guidelines for the Rising Stars! Team Challenge. The Challenge is designed to give young children a chance to create their own play and experience the fun of the creative process without limits or constraints. The Rules of the Road is the rulebook for the Destination Imagination competitive Team Challenge program. It does not apply to Rising Stars! teams. There are no specific rules or requirements for developing solutions, as there are in the competitive DI Team Challenge program. The focus should be on the creative process, whether the children are writing a play, building props, painting, learning to take turns, memorizing lines, etc. The aim is to teach Rising Stars! participants the skills they need to solve their Challenge in a safe and fun way. The adults should allow the children to do the project themselves, as much as possible. In that way, the transition to the competitive Levels of DI will be easier for the team. There are Safety Guidelines in the Rising Stars! Challenge that the team must follow if they are participating in a Destination Imagination Tournament. Also, depending on the tournament site, there may be “site-specific” Safety Restrictions for Rising Stars! teams. Contact your Tournament Director for this information.

Destination Imagination (DI) is an inquiry-based program that aims to teach the creative process from imagination to innovation. For many years in our Rising Stars! program we have been designing exciting Challenges and activities for young people from kindergarten through second grade. It is our hope that these activities excite, teach, stimulate, invigorate and encourage creative thinking in the minds of the children who participate.