



2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT



A young child with dark hair, wearing a blue sweater with white patterns, is smiling and pointing towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a blue wall and a bubble.

PLAYGROUP

A playgroup is a gathering of parents and caregivers who come together with their babies and young children to learn through play and connect with other families.

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUPS

Community playgroups cater to a diverse range of families and children, from babies up to 5 years old, and include mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other carers. Unlike supported or facilitated playgroups, community playgroups are organised and run by local parent volunteers who make decisions for the group, giving each group autonomy over how and when their sessions run, in a way that is suited to the needs of their specific community. Playgroup WA member playgroups are often located in local communities, at schools or in aged care centres. Playgroup WA supports community playgroups through membership benefits, insurance and importantly, support for running the playgroup.

FACILITATED PLAYGROUPS

Playgroup WA's facilitated playgroups are funded programs with Playgroup WA employed facilitators leading and coordinating the group. These playgroups are welcoming and inclusive spaces that offer opportunities for families to meet and socialise with others in their local community. They provide a range of information and activities to help families connect with each other and to services and activities in the area, while also helping them gain knowledge, skills and confidence. Playgroup WA facilitated playgroups include: Aboriginal Supported Playgroups, PlayConnect+ Playgroups and Multicultural Playgroups.

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President's Report



WELCOME TO OUR 2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT

As always, it has been a fun and fulfilling year for the Playgroup WA team as we continue our important work of supporting families, children, and communities across Western Australia. Building on the review and reflection conducted in the previous year, we released an updated Strategic Plan in 2024.

You will find the updated plan later in this report, and you will see it highlights our commitment to the sustainability and relevance of playgroups, and Playgroup WA, to meet the needs of families, children, and communities, today and into the future. We continue to advocate for the importance of playgroups, and play, and strive for greater participation across WA. Our support is aimed at increasing access and inclusion and to grow the capacity of families with young children.

A significant change in the past year has been the refresh of our brand and logo. We are excited to see our new logo in action, with the familiar and beloved sun symbol—representing WA's sunny climate and the vibrant energy of playgroups—while introducing a refreshed design that embodies our values of fun, inclusivity, and community. The smile incorporated in the logo reflects the welcoming and friendly nature of playgroups, and we have received wonderful feedback from both our long-time supporters and new members alike.

On behalf of the board, I hope you find this year's Annual Report both informative and inspiring. The board and team never lose focus that playgroups are the beating heart of the local communities for families with young children, and our role in supporting you all to connect through play.

To our CEO, David; the entire team; our dedicated playgroup families; and everyone who contributes to the ongoing vitality of playgroups across Western Australia, we say thank you.

Leanne Gordon

Leanne Gordon - President

OUR BOARD

Leanne Gordon - President
Sandy Davidson - Vice President
Melanie Henry - Secretary
Neil Stockdale - Treasurer
Victoria Jansen
Giulia Stangle



CEO's Report

IT'S BEEN A YEAR OF REFRESH AND RENEWAL AT PLAYGROUP WA.

Just some of the things we've done include updating our branding, including new uniforms, commencing some refitting in the office, welcoming new staff and new programs, transitioning some programs to other providers, and expanding the First 1000 Days at Playgroup model more widely.



Most excitingly for our playgroups, we also commenced the long-awaited development of a new membership system. The new system will be live in February 2025 and will substantially reduce the administrative burden on playgroups by allowing families to pay Playgroup WA membership fees directly to Playgroup WA while still ensuring playgroups have control over who joins their groups.

The expansion of First 1000 Days groups has been rapid, with 16 new groups starting between February and June 2024. As expected, there is clearly a strong appetite for new parents to connect and be supported locally. The addition of 18 groups and over 100 sessions facilitated by Playgroup Development Officers was made possible through increased support from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

During the year, we also made the difficult decision to transition Mother-Baby Nurture Groups to other providers, having determined that we had done as much as we could do. We got involved with Mother-Baby Nurture Groups to keep them going, we grew the program, helped diversify funding, and reached the point where we believed further growth required others to take it forward. We wish Ngala, Meerilinga, and Midland Women's Health all the best on the next part of the journey and thank the Mental Health Commission, Swan Communities for Children, and The Smith Family at Kwinana Communities for Children for their support in the transition. The Mother-Baby Nurture staff were patient and dedicated throughout this process, particularly Louise Miles, who did an incredible job helping everyone ensure the program continued to deliver support to vulnerable women and babies.

On the theme of transition, we also supported the Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation (GSNAC) to get their own contract with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), after delivering a wonderful playgroup in Albany in partnership in recent years. We are also optimistic about further transition opportunities.

This year also saw us commence a two-year partnership with KIIND to learn how we can support inclusivity at playgroups. Early childhood can be a very challenging and isolating time for families experiencing disability. We want to do what we can to give playgroups and families the best support and resources possible to build on the great work we know a lot of playgroups already undertake to be welcoming and supportive.

As you read this report, you will see many examples of the great work that the staff at Playgroup WA have undertaken in partnership with families and communities around the State.

As always, everyone at Playgroup WA acknowledges the work and commitment of the people that make local playgroups work. We know how important you are, the difference you are making, and what a privilege it is to support you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Zarb". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Zarb - CEO

Strategic Plan

2024-2026

Our Vision

Families and children thriving through connections in their local communities.

Our Mission

Playgroup WA advocates for, promotes, establishes and supports playgroups and related programs. This enables families and young children to regularly meet, have fun, make friends, and learn together through play in an inclusive and safe place.



Supporting the Well-Being of Families and Children

Playgroup WA will use advocacy, capacity building, promotion and collaboration to support the well-being of families and children by:

- Enabling social connections
- Promoting the importance of play
- Expanding playgroup participation
- Promoting child and family safety



Establishing and Supporting Playgroups

Playgroup WA will establish and support community and facilitated playgroups in Western Australia by:

- Expanding delivery of the First 1000 Days at Playgroup approach
- Strategically addressing playgroup access to community venues



Access and Inclusion for All Families and Children

Playgroup WA aims to enable all families to participate in playgroup by:

- Increasing support to regional and remote playgroups
- Increasing support to promote inclusive playgroups
- Working to minimise participation costs



Growing Organisational Capability

Playgroup WA will adapt to the changing needs of WA children, families and communities by:

- Implementing a new playgroup membership system
- Improving our North Perth office

Playgroup WA

Introducing Playgroup WA's new logo

In 2023, the Playgroup WA board announced a new logo design for Playgroup WA, which has since been implemented in 2024 along with a fresh style guide and new branding. The departing logo was designed in 2001 when the organisation's name changed from The Playgroup Association of Western Australia to Playgroup WA (Inc). This was when Playgroup WA implemented a new governance model, with an Executive Officer, professional staff and Board. More than two decades on, Playgroup WA has grown substantially, with numerous programs, projects and initiatives underway. It was time for Playgroup WA to introduce a vibrant and contemporary new logo, with updated brand and style guide.



Brand Symbol

The much-loved and recognised smiling sun symbol has been retained, with the design and colour refreshed, as it represents WA's sunny climate and the energetic nature of play and fun that is at the core of playgroup. The smile represents having fun together and being friendly, welcoming and inclusive.



Brand Colours

Yellow is a happy and youthful colour, symbolising energy, hope and positivity. The cyan blue colour is representative of WA's vast blue skies, enjoyed across the state. These colours are bright, playful, encourage activity, play, connection, and focus on WA.



Brand Fonts

The main font – Fredoka – is clear and accessible, while also being youthful and playful, with rounded edges. Accompanied by Poppins which is clear and accessible, and Winkle that provides a 'child-like' feel, this suite of fonts is fresh, modern and playful while remaining professional and accessible.



Playgroup WA metro team in their newly branded uniforms!

Community Playgroups

 **7161**
families



305
community
playgroups

PLAYGROUP WA SUPPORTS COMMUNITY PLAYGROUPS

During the 2023/24 year, Playgroup WA employed two new regional staff on a part-time basis in the Midwest and South West, totalling 0.87 FTE increase for regional and remote areas across the Midwest and South West of WA.

By the end of the year, Playgroup WA had 8 development officers including 3 based in regional areas and 1 team leader in the community playgroup team. In addition to this, Playgroup WA also employs development officers who establish new playgroups in schools (Enhanced Transition to School project) and in aged care centres (Intergenerational Activities program).

Playgroup WA's development officers serve as the primary contact for community playgroups, aiming to address any enquiries and assist playgroups in achieving the best outcomes. This support includes:

- Assist in establishing & promoting playgroups
- Offer advice, assistance and resources on operational aspects of playgroups, including early child development through play, committee roles and transitions, incorporation, Playgroup WA membership requirements, grant applications, insurance, fundraising, promotion, member recruitment, advocacy and venue management
- Provide support and guidance to playgroup committee members
- Provide advice for promoting and holding play events to boost the visibility of community playgroups and early years services in the community
- Support playgroups to form partnerships with other community members and organisations including integrating new parent groups into playgroup, hosting intergenerational events, support access and inclusion for parents and children with disabilities, aid in forming connections with local schools and accessing services for families and children.



”

“PLAYGROUP IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF OUR WEEK—MOST OF MY CHILDREN’S BEST FRIENDS ARE THERE AND ALL OF MY CLOSEST MUM-FRIENDS. IT HAS COME TO FEEL LIKE A LARGE EXTENDED FAMILY.”

Benefits of Community Playgroups



Play is at the heart of playgroups, offering a safe, social, stimulating environment for a wide range of play experiences. Play drives children's communication, cognitive, emotional, social & physical development by allowing them to explore, experiment and learn in an engaging and fun way.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Participation in community playgroups boosts child development, enhancing social/emotional skills by interacting with peers, stimulating language development through communication, physical skills through activity, and cognitive development through play experiences, which help children thrive and prepare for future learning.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Community playgroups strengthen communities by fostering relationships among families, volunteers and local organisations. This enhances social bonds, encouraging a sense of shared responsibility and empowerment. Playgroups support identifying and addressing community needs.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

Community playgroups are often

- Run by volunteers
- Not-for-profit
- Supported by local governments
- Located in low or no cost venues, such as local government facilities or schools

This economic model allows for:

- Sustainable and cost-effective early childhood activities
- Efficient allocation of resources
- Affordability and reduced financial barriers for families
- Opportunity to access quality play and socialisation

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Community playgroups create a valuable support network for parents and caregivers, offering a space to connect, share experiences and provide mutual support. This interaction builds peer support, reduces isolation and stress, promoting mental wellbeing and fostering a sense of belonging.

ACCESSIBILITY

Community playgroups are typically:

- Located within local neighbourhoods and communities
- Easily accessible due to proximity to home, reducing the need to travel long distances and barriers for participation
- Inclusive and welcoming families of all backgrounds and abilities

FIRST 1000 DAYS AT PLAYGROUP



Following the completion of the First 1000 Days at Playgroup project (funded by Lotterywest in 2021-2023), Playgroup WA commenced integrating this initiative into community playgroups, with the support of Playgroup WA's development officers.

During the last quarter of 2023, development officers began planning for First 1000 Days at Playgroup sessions to be introduced to new parents and babies in 2024. In the Playgroup WA Member Survey 2023, 54 playgroups expressed interest in hosting First 1000 Days at Playgroup sessions.

The development team partnered with early parenting services to provide workshops and talks to new parents on topics such as settling, sleep, nutrition, first aid, wellbeing and child development, and began approaching selected playgroup committees to begin trialling these groups at the beginning of 2024.

16 new First 1000 Days at Playgroup groups commenced



First 1000 Days at Playgroup sessions were held

102

182

families participated in First 1000 Days at Playgroup sessions



groups were held regionally in Geraldton, Dongara & Busselton

3

5

groups officially joined a playgroup and became Playgroup WA members.



FIRST 1000 DAYS AT DRUMMOND COVE PLAYGROUP

Playgroup WA established a First 1000 Days at Playgroup session at Drummond Cove Playgroup, 20km north of Geraldton. The aim was to boost participation, sustain the group long term and fill a gap in local services as there are no Early Parenting Groups run by Child Health Nurses in the region. Social media promotion raised awareness of the sessions and led to 12 enrolments.

Families heard from guest speakers on various topics including Parenting with Yoga in Mind by Parenting Connection, Child Health Nurse Mel from Desert Blue Connect, messy play sessions by Playgroup WA and a Jar of Arts baby music workshop. After identifying parent concerns about starting solids, the schedule was adapted to include the WACHS Paediatric Feeding Team and a St John's Ambulance First Aid Course.

An integrated playgroup session with Drummond Cove was held and aimed to help transition these families to regular playgroup. Drummond Cove Playgroup committee members attended to facilitate a smooth transition, resulting in 11 of the families becoming playgroup members.

Intergenerational Activities Services

Playgroup WA's Intergenerational Activities Service is funded by the WA Department of Communities. Intergenerational activities bring seniors and families with young children together and promote the benefits of intergenerational playgroups throughout Western Australia. This partnership was extended for a further 5 years in June 2024. These activities create intimate settings for authentic connections, help to bridge the gap between the generations and build a sense of community. Families, seniors and other service organisations highly recommend intergenerational activities. With high participator satisfaction and interest in intergenerational activities, Playgroup WA expects interest to continue to grow in the future.

Intergenerational activities included Playgroup WA's annual Bring a Senior to Playgroup Week, which took place from 6-12 November 2023, and involved 38 playgroups with 1,065 young children and 573 seniors



63

service provider collaborations



124

intergenerational activities



1473

seniors participating



1351

children participating

registered to participate, with half of these playgroups in regional WA. Playgroup WA's intergenerational event partnerships included the Perth Zoo, Bunbury Wildlife Park, City of Bunbury, Nollamara Day Centre with the City of Stirling, Aegis Amherst, Bethanie Elenora, Paint the Town REaD, Regis Aged Care in Bunbury and Nedlands, and Silverchain Pendana Social Centre in Bentley.

Intergenerational playgroups are often held at aged care centres and involve joint management by seniors' service staff and families.

PLAYGROUP WA SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING INTERGENERATIONAL PLAYGROUPS THIS YEAR:

- **Aegis Aged Care:** Canning Vale, Como, Melville, Innaloo, Ellenbrook
- **Amana Living:** Duncraig
- **Baptistcare:** Salter Point
- **Bethanie Aged Care:** Cooloongup, Bunbury
- **Capecare Aged Care:** Busselton
- **Carinya Care:** Bicton
- **Catholic Homes Aged Care:** Bunbury, Belmont, Guilford, Duncraig
- **Curtin Heritage Living:** Cottesloe, Mosman Park
- **Elderbloom:** Kingsley
- **Hall & Prior Aged Care:** High Wycombe
- **Margaret River Uniting Church:** Margaret River
- **Regents Garden Four Season:** Booragoon
- **Silver Chain:** Mandurah
- **West Swan Senior Day Centre:** Beechboro



Enhanced Transition to School Project

The Enhanced Transition to School (**ETTS**) project has been operating as a partnership between Playgroup WA, the WA Department of Education (DoE), the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA), and Catholic Education WA (CEWA) since September 2014.

Now in its 10th year, this state-wide project is funded through the Australian Government Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) and aims to improve transition to school outcomes for children and families by:

- Strengthening family engagement with schools through the creation, maintenance, and growth of community playgroups hosted on or near school sites, and in developing relationships between playgroups and schools.
- Enrich home learning environments for children prior to school entry with evidence-based play resources.
- Reduce financial barriers for playgroup participation by utilising existing school infrastructure.

“Playgroup at my children's primary school was incredibly beneficial to my children... they were able to become familiar and comfortable in their future learning environment and form early friendships.

It was also a great support network for me to meet both experienced and first-time parents.”



The ETTS project is achieving systemic change in the expansion of community playgroups on school sites. This supports positive parent-child engagement and accessible playgroup participation (particularly in disadvantaged areas).

Community playgroups at school venues provide a sustainable model, with participating families volunteering to run their playgroup. This reduces the costs of the playgroup, as no facilitator is required. Being family-led also builds the capacity of families and communities. Parents who volunteer at playgroups often continue to volunteer at school and sports clubs. The rent-free venues at schools and start-up support from Playgroup WA further reduces the financial and confidence barriers. It can be difficult to source venues for playgroups at reasonable costs, along with sourcing start-up toys and equipment, which can be a barrier for groups starting out.

The ETTS project focuses on collaborative engagement, with Playgroup WA staff working with schools to engage families to start playgroups on school sites. This includes providing start-up kits with initial administrative, toy and equipment resources, as well as having meetings with parents and offering trial sessions, with ideas for age-appropriate play activities.

Ongoing support and resources are provided to playgroups, encouraging self-sustainability. Playgroup WA staff also work with schools to strengthen the connections with playgroups and highlight their value in successful school transition and benefits to the school community. This year, there was a notable increase in demand initiated by schools interested in hosting a playgroup.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND ONLINE PRESENCE

The ETTS project developed evidence-based resources for families with the aim to increase knowledge of early brain/child development and provide strategies to optimise learning and development prior to school entry.

The ETTS project contributed content for the Playgroup WA website and social media platforms aimed at enriching home learning environments. This content consistently appeared in the top 10 most visited pages on the Playgroup WA website, with significant engagement.

ETTS were also involved in the re-development of the Brain Box, which is a toolkit to provide consistent, evidenced - based information to



Find out more on page 21

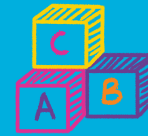
families and communities on the importance of early brain/childhood development and how to optimise that development.

The Brain Box has been effectively used in presentations to school principals and staff, and to other service providers, to highlight the critical importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life to all further development, learning, health, and wellbeing. It demonstrates how what happens to children and families in the community during the preschool years will impact on school function, and educational and social outcomes.

“ The children build confidence and become active learners in a school environment with the safety of their parent/guardian being with them and they learn to socialise with other children, parents and school staff. The interactions between families and school make school transition much easier and allow for early intervention discussions. ”



PARTICIPATION



114 playgroups in schools

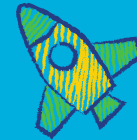
138 weekly sessions

1609 families registered

2173 children involved



GROWTH



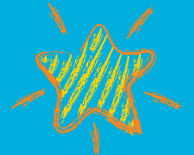
12 new playgroups started

10 playgroups restarted

SCHOOL FEEDBACK

100%

would recommend school-based parent-led playgroups



100%

reported benefits for children, families, and schools

91%

reported increased social skills with other children & adults



95%

said playgroup was valuable in preparing for school

FAMILY OUTCOMES

Increased frequency of learning activities at home such as:

- ★ Socialising
- ★ Sensory play
- ★ Fine motor activities
- ★ Physical activities
- ★ Singing songs/rhymes

Benefits our families reported

- ★ Building local friendships and connections
- ★ Having fun with their children
- ★ Sharing and learning with other parents
- ★ Increasing confidence, knowledge & skills
- ★ Developing leadership skills

*Results from Playgroup WA School Feedback Survey 2023

Grant Support

Throughout the year, Playgroup WA continued to assist playgroups to access a wide variety of grants by acting as an auspice on funding applications. In addition to this, Playgroup WA continued to administrate the Lotterywest Toys and Equipment grants for playgroups.

LOTTERYWEST TOYS AND EQUIPMENT GRANTS

In 2022, Playgroup WA secured \$805,000 in funding to administer a Lotterywest small grants program supporting community playgroups across WA to purchase toys and equipment over a three-year period. Funding was almost exhausted by June 2024, earlier than anticipated due to an increase in playgroup interest and amount of grants approved. From 2022 when the funding was granted to 30 June 2024, Playgroup WA awarded funding to 97 playgroups to the value of \$696,944.93.

This grant enables playgroups to purchase resources that encourage play and connection. It also provides for storage, organisation, and furniture that enhances the playgroup experience for current members and attracts new members.

Playgroup WA development officers actively engaged with playgroups submitting applications, offering essential information and guidance throughout the process. Collaborating closely with each playgroup, they assisted in the development of tailored proposals that considered the specific needs, aspirations, and context of each group, both for children and adults. Support and advice were extended to ensure clarity on the application process, eligibility criteria, and the types of toys and equipment covered by the grant. This included guidance on selecting developmentally appropriate and sustainable items for playgroup aged children, as well as information on reputable suppliers with whom Playgroup WA has negotiated discounts for member groups.

To facilitate a comprehensive review, an independent Playgroup WA Grants Panel further assessed and approved applications or requested additional information prior to final approval.



It is noted that 50% of the grants approved were from playgroups in regional WA. This is an increase from previous funding that is partially attributed to additional regional staff employed as development officers. These development officers worked closely with their regional communities to assist with applications.

Playgroups were asked about the value of the grant to their groups. The feedback from groups was very positive!

“It has made an enormous impact on the quality of play the children experience at our playgroup”



“We’ve had extremely outdated equipment and the grant made it possible for our families to have more interactive and play driven sessions with lovely new sensory equipment”

“We’ve had so much positive feedback from members regarding our purchases of good quality equipment. We were able to make huge improvements that wouldn’t have been possible without the grant”



What Playgroup WA members have told us



92.5%
Mums



1%
Dads



5%
Grandparents



1.5%
Other



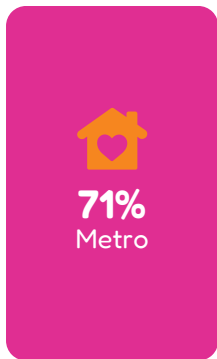
11%
25-29 years

15%
40-44 years



36%
35-39 years

30%
30-34 years



TOP BENEFITS FOR PARENTS GOING TO PLAYGROUP

81% getting out of the house & social activity

78% building friendships and social connections with other parents/carers

65% spending special time and having fun with my child(ren)

TOP BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN GOING TO PLAYGROUP

91% increased social skills through interacting with other children & adults

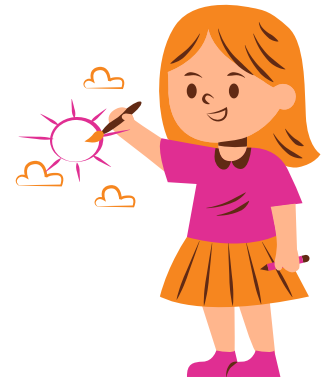
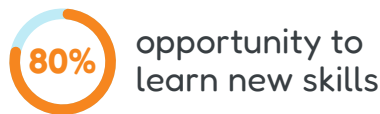
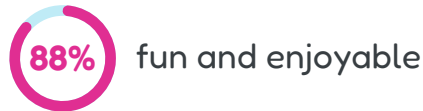
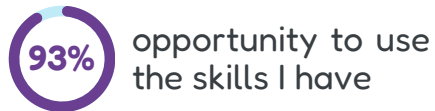
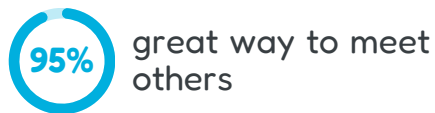
67% improved ability to share and/or take turns

62% increased opportunity for more physical activity and/or skills

* Results from Playgroup WA Member Survey 2023, which received 572 responses

What playgroup committee members have told us

HOW LEADERS HAVE FOUND THEIR ROLE



LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT PLAYGROUPS CONNECT WITH



SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM PLAYGROUP WA

- 1 Support and information/tools for running a playgroup
- 2 Grant application assistance
- 3 Promotional materials
- 4 Play ideas and activities
- 5 Social media and/or website promotion of playgroup
- 6 Information for parents
- 7 Assistance with venue lease
- 8 Fundraising ideas



Facilitated Playgroups & Programs

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Playgroup WA's Aboriginal Playgroup program is for Aboriginal families with children aged 0-5 years. It is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). Through the program, Playgroup WA is committed to closing the gap in early years education through play and playgroup participation, promoting school readiness, fostering cultural connection to country and, where possible, employing local Aboriginal staff to facilitate the playgroups. We also have great optimism about transitioning some of this work to Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations in 2024/25.

Throughout the year, all playgroups observed positive developments in the children and families who regularly attend, noting improvements in child development and child and adult social relationships. These positive outcomes underscore the significance and effectiveness of the playgroups in contributing to the well-being and growth of the participating children and families and assist in children transitioning successfully to school.



OUR PLAYGROUPS ARE LOCATED IN:

Regional Playgroups

- Albany
- Laverton
- Mt Margaret
- Menzies
- Pingelly
- Quairading

Ngaanyatjarra Lands

- Warburton
- Irrunytju
- Warakurna

Playgroup WA staff also regularly travel to the Lands and regions to support staff and meet and build relationships with local community members and services.

During this period, Playgroup WA participated in a project led by Community Skills and Training WA to develop a TAFE pathway for regional and remote Aboriginal playgroup staff. This Cert II in Community Services has been endorsed by the WA State Government and will soon be available, including remote learning options.

The **Ngaanyatjarra Lands** are located in Western Australia near the borders of South Australia and the Northern Territory. This area covers 250,000 square kms and consists of 11 communities. During the 2023/24 year, Irrunytju and Warakurna Playgroups commenced, and Warburton Playgroup closed. There were 162 sessions offered across the 3 locations with a total of 93 adults and 97 children attending. Playgroup WA worked closely with each local school, NPY Nutritionist, visiting health teams, Indigenous Literacy Foundation and the Indigenous Eye Health Unit.

STAKEHOLDER CONNECTIONS

- Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation
- Great Southern Noongar Corporation
- Ballardong Aboriginal Corporation
- Quairading School
- Pingelly Shire
- Laverton Shire
- St Joseph's College, Albany
- Northam Child development team
- Narrogin Aboriginal Health Team

regional playgroup sessions held

175



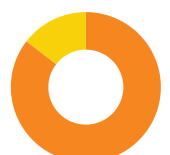
126 children

99 adults

8 dads
6 grand parents

Indigenous employment in regional playgroups

85%



PlayConnect+

PlayConnect+ playgroups are for children with disabilities or development concerns and their families, funded by the Australian Department of Social Services. Playgroup WA delivers groups as part of a national consortium managed by Autism Queensland. Each playgroup has two Playgroup WA playgroup facilitators to guide and support the families attending the playgroup.

In 2023/24, Playgroup WA facilitated 8 PlayConnect+ playgroups in WA, including 2 regional and 6 Perth metropolitan playgroups in the following locations:

- Bunbury
- East Waikiki
- Geraldton
- Seville Grove
- Swan (Stratton)
- Westminster
- Whitfords
- Willetton



70 families accessed the PlayConnect+ program



17 identified as coming from a CaLD background



10 identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

There were many developments to the PlayConnect+ program in WA, with playgroups opening in new locations, including school holiday sessions for 5-8 year olds. This growth has enabled more families to be supported in their local community. In addition, Playgroup WA has welcomed Amiee James as the new PlayConnect+ coordinator, with the retirement of the previous coordinator, Melva Marshall.

In June 2024, a new PlayConnect+ playgroup opened in Swan (Stratton), reaching an area of need. East Waikiki PlayConnect+ playgroup was adapted from online to face to face, meeting the need of the community in a way that has been well received. Several families attended the East Waikiki playgroup at the East Waikiki Child and Parent Centre and a new School Holiday playgroup was established in this location. In Geraldton, the PlayConnect+ playgroup changed venues, offering more access to the community. This move to the Rangeway Child and Parent Centre has led to an increase in interest and attendance.

The PlayConnect+ program has introduced Auslan and Key word sign to increase communication opportunities for all. Attending these sessions has enabled families to build their knowledge, skills and confidence by sharing resources, service information and advice. Friendships have been formed, with families catching up throughout the week and creating a support network for each other.



"PlayConnect+ has such an impact on all of the kids and the coordinators put so much thought into everything planned for the week, not to mention making us mums/parents feel cared for! We're so lucky to be a part of playgroup and are very grateful. We look forward to next term!"

MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUPS

Playgroup WA facilitates weekly Multicultural Playgroups in Malvern Springs and Brabham. This supported playgroup program is for families from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. At Brabham playgroup, there is also a focus on supporting children with possible developmental concerns. The playgroups are funded by the Swan Communities for Children program, delivered by Ngala, which is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.

24 families enrolled at Brabham playgroup

20 families enrolled at Malvern Springs playgroup



Many of the families attending Malvern Springs and Brabham playgroups are new to these areas. They have shared that attending playgroup is very important for them and their children, helping to overcome loneliness, making new friends, and feeling part of the community. They value the importance of social interaction, building friendships for themselves and their children, at playgroup.

At both playgroups, all parents surveyed indicated that coming to playgroup helped their children, with a key benefit being the development of social skills.

A highlight for the year was that both playgroups went on excursions to Kings Park, experiencing nature up close, with vast opportunities for free play. Both children and adults enjoyed activities provided by Kate and the Education team at Kings Park. The children especially loved going on adventures searching for Nyinyiny Coolbardie (baby magpie). This experience got the kids moving with plenty of outdoor activities such as flying like butterflies, climbing and balancing, and making music and art. They loved hearing stories of First Nation's people, bug hunting and planting seeds!



“This playgroup helps my child learn social skills and build friendship. My son is learning new things and plays with other children!”



Throughout the 2023/24 year, Playgroup WA delivered perinatal and infant mental health services through Mother-Baby Nurture, a 10-week group program for vulnerable infants and their mothers in the first six-months postpartum.

The program aims to strengthen the developing attachment relationship as well as alleviate symptoms of maternal postnatal depression and anxiety. Family wellbeing is also assisted through the provision of information about other local supports and services, as well as referrals as required.

With the addition of a funding partnership with The Smith Family in Kwinana in September 2023, Playgroup WA delivered 32 cycles of the program across 8 metropolitan sites.

In March 2024, Playgroup WA decided to transition existing Mother-Baby Nurture funding to other organisations and this transition was completed at the end of the financial year.

We thank Ngala, Meerilinga and Midland Women's Health Care Place for their decisions to take Mother-Baby Nurture groups into the future.

The transition of Mother-Baby Nurture may enable further growth as local agencies and funders become more engaged and supportive of the positive outcomes of the program.

Playgroup WA first commenced hosting the Mother-Baby Nurture program delivery in 2016. Initially, Playgroup WA aimed to preserve and then grow the program. Starting with short-term funding for 4 groups and being the sole provider, the program has grown over the years and now has a range of providers in metropolitan and regional areas. It has been wonderful to see first-hand the hard but joyful work of supporting mother baby connection and to see how program staff have also supported each other over the years.

In June 2024, Mother-Baby Nurture programs at Playgroup WA were brought to a close. Each member of the team is commended for their professionalism and care of the mothers and infants who were participating in the program during this time of transition. Staff were celebrated at a small team dinner in the community room where some of the groups took place.

“This group has helped me with my view of parenting in many ways. I'm not sure how to put it in words, but I now feel more confident being a mum.”

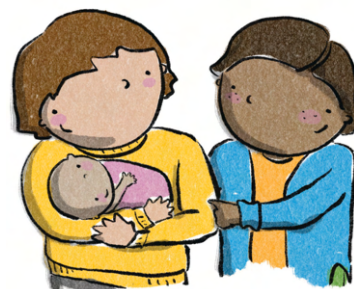


Projects

BRAIN BOX

Playgroup WA received funding for the Brain Box project from the Early Years Partnership (EYP), a collaborative initiative involving the WA State Government, the Minderoo Foundation and The Kids Research Institute Australia. The Brain Box project aimed to enhance and modernise the previous Brain Box concept, ensuring that it provided accessible, engaging and evidence-based information on early brain development. The Programs Manager, ETTS Project Manager and others worked collaboratively with the Marketing team on this project.

The Brain Box was designed to provide accurate, consistent and critical information to professionals, parents and other community members. With the Brain Box, participants can learn about the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life, the significance of early brain development and everyday activities that can help build strong brains. Plus, it encourages dialogue around the idea that children thrive when their parents have the support they need right from the start.



The contract with the EYP is now complete and the resources are available on the Playgroup WA website. The resources include a series of key messages, facilitators guide and instructions on how to make the brains for demonstration.

CO-DESIGN OF PLAYFUL HEALTH ARTS



Playgroup WA is working with Edith Cowan University on a project titled Co-design of Playful Health Arts which seeks to develop Arts play-based experiences that deliver key health messages to children and families at playgroups in Western Australia. This is being funded by a Healthway grant. During the year, Playgroup WA's CEO and Marketing Manager attended regular meetings, and connected Edith Cowan University researchers with several playgroups and with Playgroup WA's Development Officers to find out more about the play and health interests of families and children at playgroup. In the next financial year, further research will be conducted, and the activities will be created and shared on the Playgroup WA website.

YOUNG CHILDREN IN DIGITAL SOCIETY

Playgroup WA has partnered with Curtin University, the Australian Catholic University, ABC Kids and Raising Children Network on a project entitled Young Children in Digital Society. This is part of a study funded by the Australian Research Council. Several playgroup families connected with Curtin University researchers to find ways parents can use technology to support their child being physically active and to support their child transition smoothly from using a screen to the next activity.

More broadly, this project is focused on four areas of technology use outlined in the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Statement on Young Children and Digital Technologies. The four areas are Relationships, Health and Wellbeing, Citizenship, and Play and Pedagogy. Children, families and educators from across Australia have trialed and adapted different practices for engaging with technologies, supported by organisations including ABC, Early Childhood Australia and the Raising Children Network. The identified practices have been developed into ideas that can be shared and used by other children and families. A website will be launched in the next financial year, which Playgroup WA will share through its communication channels.

Marketing & Events

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS & CAMPAIGNS

Playgroup WA communicates with members and subscribers through monthly newsletters, website and social media.



401,514
website
page views



21.8K
Facebook
followers

4K
Instagram
followers



35,611
newsletter
subscribers

Playgroup WA's early bird campaign ran from January to March 2024 to encourage existing and prospective members to renew or register their playgroup membership. There were prizes for super early birds, as well as major and runner up prizes, with a total of 10 winners. The major prizes were Perth Zoo Cub Club and A to Zoo annual membership and merchandise, and minor prizes included family passes to WA Museum's To the Moon exhibition, group passes to Scitech, and eGift vouchers for personalised name labels. This was promoted through Facebook and Instagram, both paid and organic posts, a Nova advertising campaign on Nova Breakfast including breakfast traffic sponsorship and podcast digital commercials, email and website promotions. By the end of the campaign, more than 3000 families had registered or renewed their membership for 2024.

11 June 2024 marked the inaugural International Day of Play, giving us the opportunity to promote play! This new annual day to celebrate play globally was adopted in a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly in March 2024. To celebrate, Playgroup WA created and promoted a dedicated web page with play resources and activity ideas to celebrate play and learning through play. There are plans to do more to celebrate this day in 2025.

PLAYGROUP WA ANNUAL FUN DAY

The Playgroup WA Annual Fun Day took place at Wanneroo Showgrounds on 21 November 2023, sponsored by the City of Wanneroo. The free, family-friendly event attracted around 4,000 attendees and featured various activities such as play activities, stage entertainment, an animal farm, pony rides, face painting, and physical activities. More than 20 community organisations, such as Royal Lifesaving Society WA, Ngala, The Fathering Project, and Telethon Kids Institute participated providing engaging activities for children and valuable information for attendees. Feedback from these organisations was highly positive, highlighting successful connections with parents and caregivers. The event was attended by the Hon. Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services, and Linda Aitken, Mayor of the City of Wanneroo, who both spoke about the importance of playgroups in the community. A post-event survey revealed that over 92% of respondents were satisfied, with many appreciating the variety of age-appropriate activities, the venue's setup, and the fact that the event was free.



There was an excellent variety of free activities. My children had an absolute blast. The facepainting was gorgeous, the stalls were super informative. Staff were lovely. Also love that it was a free event in such a hard time / expensive time of year. Thank you so much for organising an excellent event.

PLAYGROUP IN THE PARK

Playgroup WA hosted 3 Playgroup in the Park events in March and April 2024. These smaller, local events enabled local families to learn about playgroups and other services in their community. Each event featured a mix of play activities from Playgroup WA staff and paid activities like an animal farm and music sensory walls. Local playgroups and community organisations participated, providing information and activities tailored to each location. Brownes Dairy donated 100 yoghurt pouches for giveaways at each event.

“Everyone was so friendly and informative about playgroups in the area. The set up was just enough, a little bit of every activity that all toddlers love.”

The event at **Yokine Play Space** on 13 March had over 450 registered attendees, with contributions from Yokine Playgroup, Telethon Kids Institute’s Inklings program, Parenting Connection, and City of Stirling Libraries. It was attended by the Hon. Patrick Gorman and City of Stirling Mayor Mark Irwin. On March 20 at **Fantasy Park, Waikiki**, more than 400 registered attendees enjoyed activities from 4Families and 4Dads, Ngala, Anglicare WA, Child and Adolescent Community Health, Peel Language Development and Telethon Kids Institute. The Hon. Sabine Winton and Hon. Magenta Marshall both attended. **The Frye Park, Kelmscott** event on 17 April attracted over 300 attendees, featuring local playgroups and the City of Armadale Libraries alongside Telethon Kids Institute.

Feedback surveys sent to attendees indicated over 90% satisfaction across all events, with 95% reporting they gained information about their local playgroups.



“So lovely to see parents and grandparents all together. Very special time all being together.”

INTERGENERATIONAL PLAY AT THE ZOO

Playgroup WA held an Intergenerational Play at the Zoo event on 7 May 2024, at Perth Zoo's grassed area near the new inclusive playground. Both families and seniors were invited to participate in play activities designed to foster interaction between generations. Attendees, including seniors from a local aged care centre, explored the zoo at the end of the event, with over 400 registrations. A feedback survey sent to attendees indicated overwhelmingly positive responses.



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Throughout the year, Playgroup WA connected and collaborated with other organisations for the purpose of cross promotions and mutual benefits.

Playgroup WA connected with Telethon Kids Institute and promoted their Inklings and CliniKids programs to playgroup members through Playgroup WA channels, including hosting a webinar and inviting them to attend our events.

Playgroup WA connected with Brownes Dairy to give away free yoghurt pouches to playgroups and at events, and to offer members the opportunity to win VIP Family Passes to Meet & Greet The Wiggles in Perth.

Playgroup WA joined forces with Perth Zoo to offer playgroup members prizes including zoo memberships, merch, playgroup Wild Vet incursions, and collaborative posts on social media to promote the benefits of playgroup and the Perth Zoo's educational programs.

Playgroup WA connected with Parenting Connection, Royal Lifesaving Society WA, Kiind, Kids Alive, St John WA, The Fathering Project and Gymnastics WA to cross-promote play, playgroups and important community messages such as water safety and first aid to playgroup members. Other advertisers through Playgroup WA newsletters and social media included Therapy Focus, Kindy Dance Time, Bennet Brook Railway, West Coast Steiner School, Club Med, Scitech, Goodstart Early Learning, ABC Reading Eggs, Playschool Concerts, Rail Heritage WA and St John of God.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS & BENEFITS

Playgroup WA continued to offer member discounts to members through a dedicated member discounts website, as well as providing a range of other opportunities for families.

TOP PLAYGROUP WA BENEFITS UTILISED BY MEMBERS

- 1 Entered a competition
- 2 Read the newsletter
- 3 Play ideas on website
- 4 Attended an event



WELCOME

We are excited to welcome new staff members to Playgroup WA:

Amanda Rimes

Development Officer,
Enhanced Transition to School Project

Amiee James

PlayConnect+ Coordinator

Bethany Walkabout

Aboriginal Playgroup Facilitator

Cherrie Heatherington

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Chloe Anderson

Aboriginal Playgroup Facilitator

Dawn Prendergast

Administration Manager

Denise Oxenburgh

Development Officer,
Enhanced Transition to School Project

Grace Urban

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Jacinda Clarkson

Aboriginal Playgroup Facilitator

Jennifer Gordon

Development Officer

Kiara Jones

Development Officer
Midwest & Gascoyne

Kristie Tucker

Aboriginal Playgroup Facilitator

Kristy Richardson

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Kylie Ballin

Finance Support Officer

Michelle Galloway

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Natalie Lynch Davila

Digital Marketing Officer

Paige Rae

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator
& Development Officer

Rachel East

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Renee Cowley-Cooper

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Tammy Wild

PlayConnect+ Playgroup Facilitator

Trina Bourke

Development Officer

Our Team



50 total Playgroup
WA staff

31 metro Playgroup
WA staff

19 regional Playgroup
WA staff



13 
Aboriginal playgroup
facilitators

11 
PlayConnect+
playgroup facilitators

1 
Multicultural
playgroup facilitator

TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT & TEAM BUILDING

Staff have undertaken training and development including:

- Cultural Skills & Knowledge training
- Dare to Lead certification for Executive & senior staff
- Accessibility and Inclusion training
- First Aid certifications
- Internal Canva training

as well as team building with basket weaving, a board & staff event at Flight Club and the Playgroup WA Christmas Party at North Perth Bowling Club.



INTERNAL STAFF CHANGES & MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

- Lisa Ruecroft celebrated 20 years with Playgroup WA and has semi-retired, transitioning from her long-held role as Development Officer to Multicultural Playgroup Coordinator.
- Michelle Roberts, Senior Development Officer celebrated 10 years at Playgroup WA in 2024.
- Renee Myles is Playgroup WA's new Playgroup Development Officer Team Leader, transitioning from Development Officer – Enhanced Transition to School Project and Multicultural Playgroup Coordinator.



FAREWELL MOTHER-BABY NURTURE

From 2016 to 2024, Playgroup WA delivered Mother-Baby Nurture groups in Western Australia. In June 2024, we farewell Mother-Baby Nurture as it continues independently of Playgroup WA. We sincerely thank Louise Miles for leading the program in the 2023-2024 year, which involved 19 staff supporting 32 groups in 8 metropolitan locations. We appreciate the support provided to mothers and babies and wish all staff and families well in their future endeavours.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

In April 2024, valued member of Playgroup WA, Melva Marshall, retired. In her role as PlayConnect+ Coordinator, Melva led the establishment of the PlayConnect+ program in Western Australia. Throughout her working life, Melva made a significant contribution to staff and families. We wish her a happy retirement.



THANK YOU AND GOODBYE!

We thank Playgroup WA's Warburton Playgroup facilitator, Joy McGinley, for her significant contribution to the Warburton community. We wish her well in her future endeavours.



Thank You!

Thank you to our funders, partners, sponsors and advertisers for their continued support over the past year, enabling Playgroup WA to support and promote important messages to families with young children throughout Western Australia. Playgroup WA is continuing to seek partnerships and advertisers that are aligned with Playgroup WA's values and support the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Thank you to our valued funders:

- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- WA Department of Communities
- WA Department of Education
- Lotterywest
- Ngala - Swan Communities for Children
- The Smith Family- Communities for Children Kwinana
- Autism Queensland
- WA Mental Health Commission
- WA North Metropolitan Health Service
- Early Years Partnership



Thank you to our valued supporters and partners:

- Great Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation, Albany
- Pakaanu Aboriginal Corporation Laverton
- KiiND
- City of Wanneroo
- Edith Cowan University
- Midland Women's Health Care Place
- Parenting Connection WA
- Royal Life Saving Society WA
- Wanslea
- WA Country Health Services
- Child and Adolescent Health Service
- Telethon Kids Institute
- Curtin University
- ABC Kids
- Raising Children Network
- Australian Catholic University
- Western Kids
- Kings Park Education Office
- The Fathering Project

...and thank you to all our advertisers, service providers, volunteers and supporters

DIRECTORS:

ROBERT CAMPBELL RCA, CA
VIRAL PATEL RCA, CA
ALASTAIR ABBOTT RCA, CA
CHASSEY DAVIDS RCA, CA

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS:

SANTO CASILLI FCPA PFIIA
FAZ BASHIR RCA, CPA

Playgroup WA (Inc)
ABN: 14 415 755 273

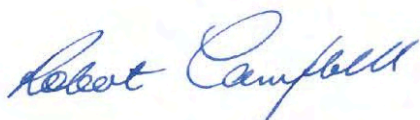
Abridged audit report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

Scope

I have audited the abridged financial report of Playgroup WA (Inc) for the year ended 30 June 2024 as set out on the following page in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the information reported in the abridged financial report of Playgroup WA (Inc) is consistent with the annual general purpose financial report from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report to the members. For a better understanding of the entity's financial position and performance, as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year, and the scope of our audit, this report should be read in conjunction with the annual general purpose financial report and our audit report.



Robert Campbell CA, CPA

Registered Company Auditor No. 486826

17 Wittenoom Street, East Perth, WA 6004

DATE: 4 November 2024

Playgroup WA (Inc)

ABN: 14 415 755 273

Abridged financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023		2024	2023
	\$	\$		\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
AS AT 30 JUNE 2024			FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024		
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash assets	1,887,583	2,013,619	Grants	3,279,926	3,060,486
Receivables and prepayment	100,261	319,226	Client contributions	212,458	206,932
Investments	183,759	166,877	Investment income	42,820	32,038
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,171,603	2,499,722	Other income	21,710	24,160
NON CURRENT ASSETS					
Plant and Equipment	25,251	25,278	Employment expenses	(2,944,118)	(2,480,057)
Property	1,600,000	1,600,000	Program expenses	(319,142)	(310,842)
Work in progress	96,896	-	Administration expenses	(255,060)	(242,365)
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	1,722,147	1,625,278	Property expenses	(90,266)	(80,020)
TOTAL ASSETS	3,893,750	4,125,000	Promotional expense	(96,922)	(96,864)
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Payables and other liabilities	856,996	980,416	Depreciation	(20,527)	(20,776)
Provisions	329,018	275,384	Surplus from operating activities	(169,121)	92,692
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,186,014	1,255,800	Other comprehensive income	-	-
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Provisions	22,253	14,596	Total comprehensive income for the year	(169,121)	92,692
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	22,253	14,596	STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,208,267	1,270,396	FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024		
NET ASSETS	2,685,483	2,854,605	Cash flows from Operating Activities		
EQUITY			Receipts from operations		
Retained Earnings	880,826	928,097	Payments to suppliers and employees		
Capital Reserves	633,018	633,018	Net cash used in operating activities		
Asset Revaluation Reserve	956,595	956,595	Cash flows from Investing Activities		
Program Reserve	215,044	336,895	Acquisition of property, plant and equipment		
TOTAL EQUITY	2,685,483	2,854,605	Interest received		
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY			Payments for investments		
Beginning Retained Earnings	928,097	1,086,963	Net cash used in investing activities		
Profit/(Loss) for the year	(169,121)	92,692	Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Transfers (to) from reserves	121,850	(251,558)	Net cash generated by financing activities		
Closing Retained Earnings	880,826	928,097	Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		
			Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		
			Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		



Playgroup  **WA**

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