

Playgroups are for everyone!

Everyone benefits from being inclusive

A sense of belonging:

An inclusive playgroup is friendly and helps everyone feel happy and like they belong. Having respect and feeling valued as our unique selves is a great feeling that builds so much confidence and joy. We can all benefit from being accepted. Everyone participates and develops to their best when they feel they belong, are valued and respected.

Encouraging children to be inclusive:

Children aged 0 to 5 years are developing so rapidly and learning to understand the world around them. When they meet and play with a variety of people and see their parents or carers being inclusive, they learn to be more open and welcoming and this can carry through to school life and adulthood. By experiencing an inclusive playgroup, children are learning to understand it's ok to be different and to accept each other. This develops empathy, resilience, self-regulation; social and emotional intelligence. One child may be able to do something that another can't, and that's ok. One child may like quiet areas and another child may like to be loud. We can be flexible and adapt to the needs and interests of each child. Research has found that where young children have a shared interest in a play activity, such as duplo, they can often create fun play together even if they have varying abilities.

Inclusive parenting:

As adults at playgroup, we can role model this positive attitude and acceptance of differences. Our children see how we behave and learn from us. We can learn from each other the many ways to parent and care for our children. When you see something happening, don't judge too quickly. You might not know what is going on in their life and maybe they are still working this out themselves. Children with autism or developmental delays may not be diagnosed until they are older, and their parent may be navigating this themselves and working out the best way to support their child. Be understanding that this isn't easy, and perhaps you could ask if they're ok and if you can help. We are all learning and developing as parents, in our own unique family circumstances. We could all do with some kindness and understanding, particularly when facing additional challenges.

If we can find ways to include children and consider their needs when they are young, it helps us all to understand each other more and have more compassion for each other. As children grow up, they will be more understanding and better able to communicate what they need and be better at accommodating the needs of others.