

# Playgroup Manual



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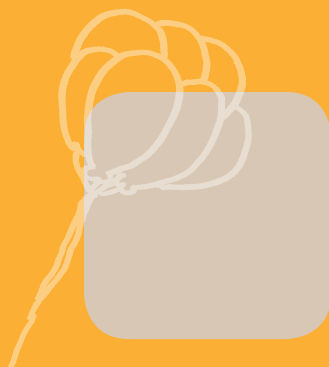


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“Use the manual as a reference book for discussion and decision making. Use the information to work positively through challenges and conflicts.”

## 1 Introduction



# 1 Introduction

This manual is an important resource for community playgroups. It was developed by Playgroup WA to provide information, advice, strategies and templates to support the families to establish and manage successful community playgroups. It aims to show how to get the most out of the playgroup experience for children, adults and the community.

## 1.1 How to use this manual

There is no right or wrong way to use this manual!

Each playgroup is different so it likely that different aspects of the manual will be more or less useful to different playgroups.

To get the best out of this manual we suggest each playgroup read it and use the information relevant to them.

The Playgroup WA Manual is an online resource but can be downloaded and printed as necessary. Some groups may find it useful to have a printed copy of the whole manual at the playgroup while others may just keep copies of the most relevant sections to them.

It is a good idea to revisit the manual from time to time as the needs of a playgroup can change over time. When playgroups review how their playgroup is going and whether there are areas to improve they may find information that seemed irrelevant at the beginning is now useful.

Encourage people who are taking over new roles or responsibilities to read the relevant sections and suggest to new families joining your playgroup to go to the Playgroup WA website to read the manual for themselves.

Use the manual as a reference book for discussion and decision making. Use the information to work positively through challenges and conflicts.

Playgroups are encouraged to photocopy pages of the manual and pass them around to their members. You may also quote the manual in your newsletter as long as you acknowledge the source.



## 2 About Playgroup

“A playgroup is a group of parents, caregivers and extended family who come together with their babies and young children in a relaxed and friendly environment to learn together through play.”



## 2 About Playgroup

A playgroup is a group of parents, caregivers and extended family who come together with their babies and young children in a relaxed and friendly environment to learn together through play.

Playgroups vary from one session a week made up of three or more families to multiple sessions over the week with over 200 families. In WA there are almost 1300 community playgroup sessions running every week through the efforts of families and volunteers.

It is important to note that playgroups are different to childcare and kindergarten programs. At playgroup parents and caregivers attend with their children and retain responsibility for supervising the children they bring to playgroup.

### Some common characteristics of playgroup include:

- Members include parents, caregivers and young children from 0-5 years of age
- Meet regularly, often for two hours each session
- Family run and organised by members
- A great place for children and their carer(s) to learn and play together
- Welcoming and friendly to all families wishing to join
- Held in a convenient location for its members in the community, like community centres, homes, schools, healthcare centres and libraries

### 2.1 What happens at playgroup

First and foremost PLAY! Playgroup sessions are also generally a combination of free play and planned activities including:

- Indoor and outdoor play
- Physical play
- Arts and craft
- Music and movement
- Story time and nursery rhymes
- Conversation and support
- Morning tea/snacks or refreshments

### 2.2 The benefits of playgroup

Playgroups benefit children, families and the wider community.

Whilst it is true children can play anywhere, playgroup has an added benefit of providing opportunities for playing with other children and practising important social skills.

Importantly, playgroup also provides the opportunity where parents and children can play together, which is critical to children's healthy development. By creating a space where parents and caregivers have the opportunity to spend time with their children, playgroups can enhance relationships through play.

The benefits of playgroup for children:

- Provide safe and nurturing environments where children can play and learn
- Enhance healthy early brain development through play
- Provide opportunities for children to create, invent, reason and problem solve
- Provide opportunities to build attachment between adults and children as they play together, and share time and experiences
- Help children to learn social skills as they negotiate with peers, resolve conflict, take turns, share and make friends
- Help children to build resilience to enable them to cope with new situations and manage stress and adapt to change



#### The benefits of playgroup for families:

- Providing a community based space where families can create their own locally based friends and social networks
- Providing a place where parents and caregivers can support each other through sharing ideas, parenting experiences, concerns and information
- Building family capacity through peer support
- Providing a place where families can build long-term friendships as their children grow and transition to school
- Offering affordable and regular opportunities for families to enjoy a shared outing
- Provide a cost effective focal point for engaging families with other community services

#### The benefits of playgroup for the whole community:

- Community playgroups are an important part of the fabric of a vibrant community. Playgroups assist the development of social networks by promoting supportive relationships within and between families
- Being predominantly run by parents they also offer opportunities for families to become actively involved in their community through volunteering and peer support
- Playgroups also support positive long term outcomes in communities by promoting the healthy development of children prior to school age. We know that in the areas of Perth where higher numbers of children attend playgroup that they are also more likely to be developmentally on track

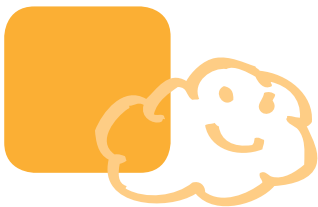
#### In a nutshell community playgroups:

- Encourage a sense of belonging, identity and social inclusion within communities
- Build enduring social groups through relationships based on a common purpose; promoting shared interests and purpose
- Promote social competence for children and families
- Build community resilience and sustainability
- Contribute to creating child friendly communities where children and families are valued
- Increase awareness and access to information about the community
- Provide a 'soft entry point' to introduce services to families with young children

## 2.3 Types of playgroups

All playgroups are similar in nature; babies and young children accompanied by caring adults meeting regularly to play and learn together. Playgroups can also be quite diverse and unique. All families are different and bring with them a range of experiences, skills, interests and expectations.

Sometimes they are organised around a particular need or common interest such as baby, non-English speaking, special needs, educational philosophy or specific approach to parenting. Anyone can attend these playgroups but they usually attract families with similar interests or needs.



Some examples of different types of playgroups:

- Groups for specific ages - baby, toddler and 3+ sessions

There are many playgroups that have a range of different ages in the group but sometimes families want to attend a playgroup where children are similar in age to their own child or because they want the playgroup session to focus on activities to enhance a particular developmental stage. When creating a playgroup for a specific age for children, make sure toys and activities are age appropriate and support the learning and development of different skills. Playgroup WA has activity sheets and homemade toy ideas for the different ages and stages of development.

#### Activity Sheets and Resources

- Home-based groups

Some families prefer home-based playgroups as it may be easier for the children to play with a small group of children in a home setting. Parents may even find it easier to get to know each other in home playgroups since they tend to be smaller. It is suggested to keep the group between six and eight families. With older and more mobile children, trips to a local park or library are also a great idea.

- Fathers' groups

Many fathers already attend community playgroups. Some prefer to join a fathers' only playgroup where the playgroup is run by local dads and offers the opportunity to hang out and offer support for fathers who are their children's primary caregiver.

- Groups of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds choose to meet together to socialise with families who speak the same language or come from similar cultural backgrounds and to give their children a culturally rich experience. A couple of popular language and cultural playgroups include Japanese and French playgroups.

- Fly in fly out (FIFO) family groups

These playgroups consist of families who have a family member who works on a FIFO basis. It is a great opportunity to meet other FIFO families that know exactly what it is like when you are home alone, while the other parent/partner is away at work and share parenting tips and challenges. They are a great network of support whether you are staying at home or flying in and out.

- Nature based groups

Nature based playgroups are about getting outside and enjoying nature on a regular basis. They aim to connect young children with nature through weekly, fortnightly, or monthly sessions. Taking playgroup outside in the rain or shine is always fun. Nature based playgroups provide families the opportunity to share outdoor adventures and experience the benefits of time spent outside together.

- Intergenerational groups

Intergenerational playgroups bring together three or four generations. Intergenerational playgroups can also be established in a variety of settings including community, school or aged care settings such as residential care facilities, retirement villages and community based seniors centres. These playgroups provide seniors, children and their parents and caregivers with opportunities to interact through play.

- Grandparent groups

Grandparents often attend community playgroups and some form their own playgroup. With many grandparents providing care for their grandchildren these groups can provide much needed peer support.

Other popular playgroup types include:

- Montessori/Waldorf/Steiner groups
- Groups with children with a disability

These are just a sample of the types of playgroups available. Families are always welcome to start up their own playgroup based on their own needs and interests.



“To support all young children, families  
and communities to enjoy, learn and grow  
through playgroup.”

## 3 About Playgroup WA



## 3 About Playgroup WA

Playgroup WA has been supporting, servicing and establishing playgroups throughout Western Australia since 1972.

Playgroup WA (formerly called the Playgroup Association of Western Australia) began in 1972 and has grown from a tiny office in Victoria Park with one staff member to a two storey office in North Perth and 20 staff members. Currently more than 12,000 families enjoy the benefits of playgroup in sessions operating from Esperance to Kununurra, from Leonora to Lancelin and throughout the Perth metropolitan area. Playgroup WA has more than 450 member playgroups.

Playgroup WA is a community organisation run on a not-for-profit basis. Management of Playgroup WA is vested in a voluntary board, elected each October at the Annual General Meeting. The Board is responsible for the overall management in areas such as policy development and financial management.

### Our vision

The people of WA value playgroups

### Our purpose

To support all young children, families and communities to enjoy, learn and grow through playgroup

### We value

- The importance of play in learning
- The role of parents, families and communities in supporting the well-being of young children
- The role of playgroup in supporting families with young children
- The UN 'rights of the child'

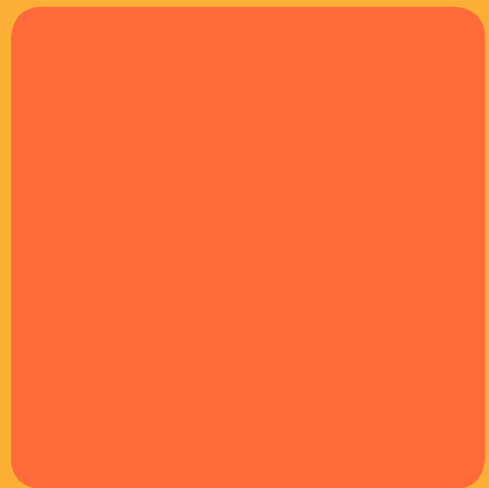
### 3.1 Playgroup WA membership

Being a member of Playgroup WA (Inc) means that you are part of the State-wide playgroup family. This is a huge network throughout WA and provides opportunities for collective lobbying and the raising of public awareness of playgroups through Playgroup WA (Inc). Although your playgroup will continue to run independently, it will have an important link to Playgroup WA so that you can receive all the benefits that come from our ability to organise resources and services centrally.

Playgroup WA has a strict **Privacy Policy** and as a member of Playgroup WA you are assured that your details will be treated confidentially.



## 4 The Playgroup Session



“When playgroups offer a range of different types of activities they support children’s development across all developmental domains including social, cognitive, emotional, physical and language development.”



## 4 The Playgroup Session

Playgroup sessions can be very different and will depend on the participants' needs and interests. Most playgroup sessions run for 2 hours but this is up to each group to decide. Below is a guide showing how a typical playgroup session might run.

9.30am	Set up and welcome
10.00am	Free play
10.20am	Morning tea
10.40am	Simple guided activity
11.00am	Packing away, dishes etc
11.15am	Music and story time
11.30am	Goodbye time. This might include a goodbye song

This is only a suggested guide to planning your playgroup sessions. Always remember to be flexible and think about the needs and interests of the group.

### 4.1 Playgroup activities

Many playgroup sessions will include activities like free play, physical play, craft, music, story time and morning tea. Some playgroup sessions will include all of these activities and some will only include a few. Generally a playgroup session will include free play and planned activities and if the venue allows there may be indoor and outdoor play. The types of activities a playgroup can enjoy include:

- Physical play - for example obstacle courses, stepping stones and climbing
- Arts and craft
- Music and movement
- Story time and nursery rhymes
- Messy play - for example finger painting and water play

#### Activity Sheets and Resources

When playgroups offer a range of different types of activities they support children's development across all developmental domains including social, cognitive, emotional, physical and language development.

#### View supporting Research & Publications

Playgroup WA has many resources available to assist you in coming up with ideas for fun activities. We recommend our publication *Play Starters* which is full of bright, creative and cost-effective ideas for babies and young children. Our website, eNews and Facebook have great tips and you can also call our Hotline on 1800 171 882.



Go to the following websites for more information and ideas on play:

[Early Childhood Australia](#)

[Healthy WA](#)

[Raising Children Network](#)

[Zero to Three](#)

## 4.2 Toys and equipment

Basic toys and play equipment for playgroups

- A variety of balls, small bats
- Interlocking or wooden blocks, construction sets (at least 20 large pieces)
- Washable dolls, doll's bed and bedding
- Baby toys, rattles, soft toys, washable or cardboard books
- Large crayons, paste and paint brushes, non spill paint pots, blunt ended scissors
- Puzzles
- Sets of animals, cars, trains, musical instruments, tea sets, cooking sets
- Buckets, spades, scoops, dump trucks and graders for the sandpit or digging patch
- Push or pedal wheeled toys such as tricycles, walker wagons, pull along toys, dolls' prams, wheelbarrows
- Floor rugs, play mats
- Tarpaulins or sheets of strong plastic to protect floor from messy play activities
- Storage boxes
- Furniture for small children



### Ten questions to ask when choosing toys for playgroup

1. Will it withstand constant, heavy use?
2. Is it safe for all children or will it need to be used in a restricted area?
3. Can it be easily cleaned?
4. Is it appropriate to the childrens' abilities?
5. Does it encourage social interaction or is it used individually?
6. Is it simple and able to be used by children of different ages?
7. Does it give the opportunity to develop and practise new skills?
8. Does it have scope for imagination and experimentation?
9. Is it in line with the interests of this group of children?
10. What is its value - does it entertain, encourage physical play, foster creativity or is it a tool for imaginative play?

Take into account individual differences. The aptitude, personality and interests of a child will determine which toys he or she prefers. Toys that fascinate one child may be of no interest to another.



### 4.3 Recycled materials for play

Play does not need to be expensive. There are lots of activities that can be done at playgroup cheaply using recycled materials and some imagination. Have fun making toys and then using your own creations.

Here are some simple ideas you could try:

- Cartons and boxes become building blocks, cubbies, cars, boats, a doll's bassinet, containers for packing and emptying, tunnels for crawling through, a surface for painting
- Plastic drink containers can be used for filling and emptying with water or sand, shakers for music, cut down to make funnels and scoops
- Ice-cream container lids can be used for stencils
- Coloured lids can be sorted or threaded into a baby's rattle
- Tyres (not steel belted) can be stacked, rolled, cut in half for water or sand play, used as a swing or in an obstacle course
- Paper off-cuts, old posters can be used for tearing, drawing, painting, cutting and pasting
- Dresses, skirts, shirts, ties, waistcoats, cameras, bags, belts, scarves for dress ups for pretend and role play
- Cardboard cylinders for telescopes or flutes

If you have any of your own ideas and would like to share them email [publications@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:publications@playgroupwa.com.au) or post them on the Playgroup WA Facebook page.

### 4.4 Setting up a great playgroup environment

Once playgroups have been in operation for a while, they usually have plenty of toys for the children. In fact, there can be so many toys available that children are either overwhelmed and unable to make a choice or, for a feeling of security, they head straight for the same thing every time. When you set up your area for playgroup you may wish to consider the following:

Things to consider when setting up the play environment:

- Are the toys and activities appropriate for the ages and levels of development of the children attending the playgroup?
- Are there a range of play experiences being offered; such as make-believe (dress-ups and props), role-play (home and work equipment such as pots, pans and lawn mowers), creative play and manipulative toys (that push or pull along, threading, puzzles and so on)
- Are there toys and activities suitable for children with additional needs?
- Are there toys and activities which display a sensitivity towards the cultural backgrounds of all the members of the group?
- Are there too many toys and activities? If there are too many toys out at one time, pieces are more likely to get mixed up and go missing. This is frustrating for everyone but happens less frequently when some items are left in the storeroom
- Is there enough equipment such as glue pots, brushes, scissors and stickers for the number of children in the group to avoid frustration if they have to wait too long?
- Rather than get out all the toys every week, try making a selection. If a certain toy or set of toys has been left in the cupboard for a few weeks, even a term, the novelty of seeing it again makes it like new





## 4.5 Laying out a play space

Having a great playgroup environment is not just about having the right toys and equipment. It also involves setting out activities in a way that makes them safe, accessible and appealing to children.

Here are some ideas you may find useful in laying out the playgroup space:

- Set out play materials and toys in as large an area as is safe and sensible. This gives the children room to move, separates the activities clearly and prevents a feeling of being overcrowded
- Use floor space as well as small tables to provide a variety of play surfaces. Sets of smaller toys such as farm animals and construction blocks are great to keep in draw string bag mats. At the end of the session they can be easily collected, the strings drawn and the bag hung up in a cupboard
- Have a separate area for quiet play; puzzles, nesting and posting toys, story books and drawing. Children often like a time with quieter activities and this is best if removed from the more noisy play!
- Have messy activities set up in areas easily mopped and close to a sink or bucket for easy cleaning. Spills should be quickly cleaned up from the floor to prevent slipping! Keep paint, playdough, glue, glitter and so on away from books, puzzles and posters
- Make sure there is a special safe, play area on the floor for babies
- Ride-on toys are best used in outdoor areas or clearly defined spaces

## 4.6 How structured should a playgroup session be?

Generally playgroups will have some kind of routine or structure. This may be set times for different activities or it may be free flowing and follow the children's interests on the day. There is no right or wrong amount of structure or routine. Each playgroup and each session in larger playgroups need to determine what is appropriate for them.

Baby playgroups don't need much structure as set activities aren't generally appropriate for babies and they are often feeding and sleeping at different times throughout the session. Older children may require a more structured schedule of activities to keep them active and interested but this will always depend on the individual needs of each playgroup. As the ages and stages of the children change, the structure may also need to change.

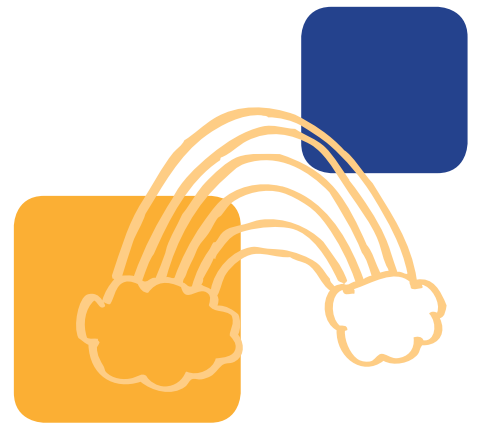
We recommend that each playgroup session discuss the kinds of activities, routines and structure they want at playgroup. This can be done informally over a coffee or at a planning or committee meeting. Get input from the playgroup members so that you know how much structure the group feels is important.

Some advantages of having a routine can include:

- Children have the opportunity to participate and try a range of activities
- Offering a range of activities enhances children's gross and fine motor skills, language development and social, emotional and cognitive development
- The group including children and adults know what to expect
- Routine can help prepare children for more formal learning
- Ensures the group is ready to leave the venue when their allotted time is up
- Issues around safety can be more effectively managed. For example, the consumption of hot drinks, the use of scissors, and rough and tumble play
- Keeping the playgroup running smoothly and sharing tasks

Playgroups with multiple sessions may like to discuss this at a committee meeting and provide advice and ideas to the different sessions and get their ideas about ways of introducing more or less structure.

Whatever your playgroup decides it needs to be a shared decision.



## 4.7 Setting up routines

Having a simple routine can be a great way to introduce some structure to your group if that is what the group decides. Setting a timetable for different activities during the session can help to make children settled and confident at playgroup. The schedule might include time for indoor play and outdoor play, set activity times such as craft, story time and music time, morning tea, packing up time and a goodbye activity.

Playgroup routines might also include rules for behaviour such as washing hands before eating and sitting down for morning tea and story time. Just keep in mind that children develop differently and that it is always important to be flexible in applying your playgroup rules. Some children may need support in order to gradually participate in routines.

It is a good idea for playgroups to review their routines from time to time to ensure that sessions are meeting the needs of everybody. Periodically the group should make time to talk about their groups routines and timetable to ensure that it is meeting needs and where necessary make changes to ensure that the environment is stimulating, nurturing, developmentally appropriate, safe and comfortable for the families attending.

## 4.8 Playgroup session outings

Everyone loves an outing and organising one occasionally with your playgroup can bring a pleasant and fun change from your regular sessions.

It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive; just a walk to the local park for morning tea can be a real treat and a trip to the letter box or post office to post a letter to yourself is fun too.

However, if you'd like to plan something a little further away, consider:

- Who decides where and when?
- Is it free or is the cost within the reach of all families?
- Does the activity or destination fit the playgroup philosophy so that it is suitable for all families and

children of all ages?

- How will families without transport get there?
- Would it add to the experience to hire a bus?
- Should it be during playgroup time or a family day on the weekend?
- Can/should the excursion be subsidised out of general funds?

### Some excursion ideas

- Local parks and gardens, parks out of your immediate area which may be new to your members
- Walk to the deli, walk to the letter box, walk around the block
- The local library will almost certainly have story time sessions
- Some fire stations will let playgroups visit or can bring a fire engine to visit you
- Take a train, bus or ferry ride
- National parks and forest areas
- Working farms

Other excursion ideas (where costs are involved)

- Wildlife parks, animal sanctuaries and the zoo
- Indoor soft play centres
- Farm schools and display farms
- Museums, exhibitions and science displays

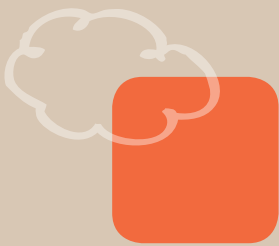
### Taking care

Anything out of the ordinary can make children very excited and they can easily forget the simple rules they are used to in the familiar playgroup environment. Adults need to be extra vigilant on excursions especially around traffic and water and remember to be SunSmart.

### Insurance cover for excursions

For information about specific conditions relating to insurance cover during playgroup outings, please contact Playgroup WA's insurance broker. Contact Playgroup WA for contact details or [click here to go to Section 11 Insurance](#).

## 5 Finding Members and Keeping Them



“Playgroups are a source of enjoyment for many families in the community and are an important community resource.”



## 5 Finding Members and Keeping Them

If a playgroup doesn't have members then there is no playgroup. Encouraging people to become members of playgroup and maintaining membership numbers is clearly very important. The following sections offer some ideas and strategies to promote playgroups and keep members.

### 5.1 Promoting your playgroup

Playgroups are a source of enjoyment for many families in the community and are an important community resource. Promoting your playgroup can help to:

- Inform other families in the community about your playgroup
- Support families with young children who feel isolated
- Make the general community aware of the value of playgroups
- Attract new members

**Here are some suggestions for promoting your Playgroup:**

#### Playgroup WA Database

When you join as members of Playgroup WA (Inc), your playgroup is automatically entered into the database so that families enquiring about playgroups in their local area can be referred to your group.

#### [playgroupwa.com.au](http://playgroupwa.com.au)

As a member of Playgroup WA, your playgroup's details can be added to the 'Find a playgroup' directory at [playgroupwa.com.au](http://playgroupwa.com.au).

'Find a playgroup' is the most frequently visited page on Playgroup WA's website. Let us know if your details change so families can get up to date contact information.

If your playgroup needs more members you can also gain extra publicity by placing a free advertisement on our Playgroup Noticeboard at [playgroupwa.com.au](http://playgroupwa.com.au)

#### Facebook

The Playgroup WA Facebook page is constantly increasing its number of followers and is a great place to promote your playgroup. Simply go to [facebook.com/PlaygroupWA](https://facebook.com/PlaygroupWA) and post details about your playgroup.

You can also create your own Playgroup Facebook page to stay in touch with your members and people in your local community. There are already many playgroups in WA who are successfully using Facebook as a way of promoting their playgroup. If you would like more information on setting up your own Facebook page, please click on the link below:

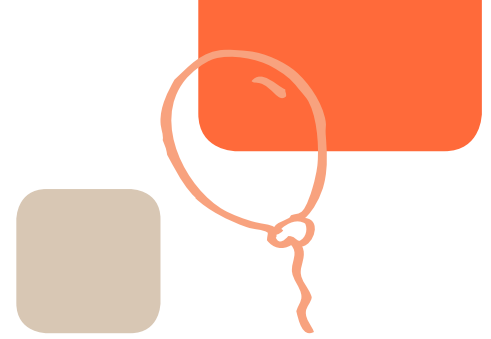
[www.facebook.com/help/pages/getting-started](https://www.facebook.com/help/pages/getting-started)

#### Word of mouth

Most families join a playgroup because a friend invited them. Chat to your friends and relatives about playgroup. Send playgroup information to your networks via email, text message or social network sites. If your playgroup is trying to build up its members you could also carry playgroup information with you and pass it on to parents with young children you meet while shopping, at kindergarten pick up or wherever you go in your local area.

#### Information stand

Set up an information stall at the local shopping centre, library or community centre. This is a great way to speak personally with people about the playgroup. Have information that people can take away with them. Remember to get permission from the venue owner to set up an information stand.



## Posters

Make a poster about your playgroup and display it at local meeting places. Advertise on community boards at local libraries, banks, local school, shopping centres, child health clinics or doctors' surgeries.

How to make a poster

- Community notice boards usually have limited space available so make a poster to a reasonable size, such as A4 (210 x 297mm) or A5 (148 x210mm)
- Keep information to a minimum but make sure contact details are clear
- Contact us to get the playgroup member logo and feature the logo prominently on the poster
- Add some colour, but avoid yellow printing as it is hard to read from a distance
- Include a child's drawing to add interest and appeal
- Draw attention by adding images of playgroup activities
- Add a tear off section with contact details at the bottom so people can take them with them

## Brochures

Make a brochure that is a smaller version of the poster with more details added such as:

- Playgroup name
- Ages of children
- What a playgroup is
- Where and when you meet
- Contact person
- What happens at playgroup
- What to bring
- Term dates
- Fees
- Your playgroups basic guidelines and philosophy

Circulate the brochures around the local area, have a pram walk and drop brochures in letterboxes or leave them at places in your community where families with young children frequently visit, such as libraries, child health clinics, doctors' surgeries or pharmacies.

## Signage

Put a simple 'PLAYGROUP' sign with a phone number and email contact on a fence, wall or noticeboard where you meet. Be sure to provide a mobile number as busy playgroup families are often hard to reach. You may be able to have a sandwich board outside your building while your playgroup is meeting. These can be particularly useful if it is unclear where the playgroup venue or room is located. We have some fun Playgroup Meets Here signage as well - email [hotline@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:hotline@playgroupwa.com.au) and ask about how you can receive one for FREE.

## Events

Plan an event to promote your playgroup. It could be an open day, a teddy bear's picnic or bring a friend to playgroup event. Plan events carefully and advertise widely within your local community. Invite people to come along and meet you, see what happens at playgroup and share a morning tea, afternoon tea, lunch or a coffee. It would be a great idea to organise some activities for families to participate in. Maybe invite the local media, local councillors and politicians. Make sure that the event is well organised and that all visitors are warmly welcomed and encouraged to join in. Be sure to have information on hand about your playgroup including contact names and details, session times and costs. The aim is to make the day so much fun, that families want to return.

## Council Listings

Contact your local council and ask to be included on its website and in its next community handbook. Update your information each year.

## Professionals and other groups

Ask for help from your local child health clinic, children's librarian, school principal or kindergarten teacher. People working with families are often happy to help or suggest ways of promoting playgroup. Talk about playgroups with local coordinators from the **Australian Breastfeeding Association, Australian Multiple Birth Association** and other family service groups.

## National Playgroup Week

During National Playgroup Week playgroups around Australia let people know why they go to playgroup. Playgroups are encouraged to create their own original event during National Playgroup Week to advertise throughout their community or in their local papers. Lots of people don't know or understand what goes on at playgroup or that there is a playgroup close by. This is your chance to show what your playgroup offers and invite families to come and join in the fun.

### 5.1.1 Planning your promotion

Good planning is essential if your promotional drive is to be successful.

#### Before the event

Decide as a group what you will do and where, when and how you will do it. Keep focused on why you are actually having the event to help you make these decisions. Get everyone involved and value everyone's input. Keep everyone well informed as organisation of the event progresses.

Discuss:

- Using community facilities - parks, shopping centres, local buildings
- Keeping activities simple
- Preparing and keeping to a budget
- Personally inviting community leaders, media and special guests
- Confirming entertainers and venues in writing
- Advertising possibilities
- Having a wet weather contingency plan
- Documenting everything to help plan future events
- Conducting a safety check of area
- Having first aid on hand

After the event

- Follow up all contacts made
- Discuss what went well and what didn't
- Enjoy your success and learn from what may not have worked well
- Complete documentation including all financial transactions
- Write thank you letters
- Put all pictures taken and published newspaper articles on the playgroup notice board

Email photos and details of your event to **[publications@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:publications@playgroupwa.com.au)** or post these on the Playgroup WA Facebook page, so that other playgroups can share your great ideas.





### 5.1.2 Local media & gaining publicity for your playgroup

#### Media relations

Using media is one of the most important ways your playgroup can raise its profile.

#### Local publicity

Getting publicity in your local newspapers is easier than you think. Local newspapers are about local news and what better than a story about a local playgroup. Email a few lines to your local newspaper's community column stating your playgroup name, where and when you meet, a contact phone number and that new families are welcome. The newspaper will not keep your item on file so you will need to resubmit it each time you want it to appear. To get more space, you will need to offer the newspaper a photo opportunity. Try something unusual like adult sack races, a visiting animal farm or performing grandparents. Photographers are more likely to attend if there is something visually interesting for them to capture. Think about this before you make contact with the newspaper.

Steps to successful local publicity:

1. Think about what would make a good photo opportunity. Getting a photograph of your playgroup published will attract more attention than just words. If you need pre-publicity think how you can mock up a photo opportunity. Would preparations for the day make a good photograph e.g. children making a mural?
2. Find out the name of the senior journalists at your local newspapers and call them about three weeks before you want something to appear. Be enthusiastic! Tell them about your event and ask if a photographer can come. Ask if they would like you to send details

3. If they are interested, send brief details covering what, where and when your event is and if applicable why you're holding the event. Supply one contact name with a business hours phone number for more information. Send these details to them soon after you have spoken
4. One week before your event confirm the photographer is still coming
5. Make sure someone greets the photographer and offers assistance
6. If a photographer does not attend try again next time
7. Regularly submit brief details about your playgroup to the newspapers' community columns
8. If possible, always give your story to more than one local newspaper to increase your chances of getting a run

#### Public service announcements

Non-profit organisations can use free radio and television airtime for public service announcements.

Tips for public service announcements:

- Try to match the quality of (competing) professional advertisements
- Make sure the area/s covered by a particular station will reach your desired audience
- Find out what public service announcement time is available on local stations and the preferred format for releases
- Make short, concise announcements
- Have only one message in your announcement
- Always thank the station for airing your public service announcement

## 5.2 Making everyone feel welcome

Playgroups, by their very nature bring all kinds of people together: mothers, fathers, family day care workers, grandparents, nannies, young parents, older parents, parents who work outside the home, parents who are full time at home with their children, same sex parents, single parents. Anyone caring for children 0-5 years old can go to a local playgroup.

Playgroup WA encourages playgroups to allow new families to visit their playgroup or preferred playgroup session for up to three weeks to allow the families to see if it is the right playgroup for them. After three weeks, in order to be covered by insurance families will need to pay the Playgroup WA membership fee. The playgroup should then forward the fees to Playgroup WA as soon as practicable.

## 5.3 Settling new families

Arriving at playgroup for the first time can be daunting for families. Some families will feel shy and may find it hard to introduce themselves to others.

The following ideas may be useful:

- A welcoming letter and/or booklet with basic information about the playgroup and outlining expectations of them
- A welcoming person - spends some time with the new family and gives basic information about the group

- Create a buddy system - link a regular playgroup parent/carer to a new person so that they can help the new family during the first few visits. They can be available to answer questions and perhaps make contact with the new family between sessions
- Make time at the end of the session for a chat with new families
- Don't give too much information on the first day - just give enough to help families get by, for example a rough timetable and what to bring each week may be enough information on the first day
- Say goodbye at the end of the session - encourage them to come back next week
- Use name tags - it will help new members when talking to others and will help them feel more comfortable if others are able to call them by their first name
- Phone them during the week - see if they have any questions and find out how they felt about their first day
- Allow new families to attend for several weeks before you ask them to become involved in the roster system
- Roster new members with someone else who has done that task before. The welcoming person or buddy can gently remind new members that it is their turn to do a certain job and explain what is involved

Example is the best teacher. If your playgroup has an atmosphere of caring and co-operation and members are seen to participate fully in all aspects of playgroup, new members will quickly see the value and importance of this and happily join in.

Remember that welcoming new members is everyone's responsibility.

Some close-knit playgroups or sessions find it difficult to accept new members. Try to make a family's first impressions really positive and be aware that playgroups do indeed change as some families leave and new ones join and view these changes in a positive way.

## 5.4 Valuing differences

One of the joys of playgroup is that it brings together families from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds, all sharing the common objective of having fun with their children. All members have something to offer, whether it's from their management and organisational skills, or their practical and creative skills.

A little thought in the playgroup's planning ensures that all families continue to feel welcome no matter what their differences or personal circumstances.

### 5.4.1 Welcoming different cultures

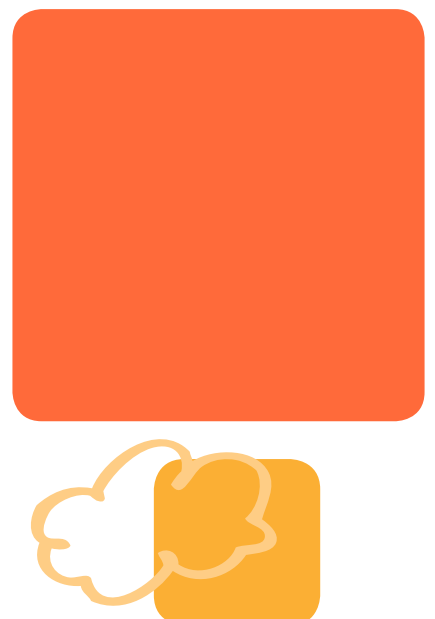
Western Australia is made up of people from all over the world with different cultural backgrounds, regions and languages. This brings a wonderful diversity to our communities across the state and is reflected in community playgroups.

Here are some ideas for playgroups to consider that might help to create an environment that includes and welcomes diversity:

- Encourage families to discuss their culture
- Share traditional foods and recipes
- Share the common language of a smile, body language and hand gestures
- Display a poster at your playgroup that says 'welcome' in many languages
- Learn the words for 'hello' in several languages. After a greeting song like, What do you think my name is, you could say, "Let's say hello to Gemma in Indonesian today. Halo Gemma!"
- Have families from different cultures represented on posters and flyers
- Have a flag day and paint a variety of flags to hang up at playgroup. Explain each country has special colours and patterns on their flag

- Discuss festivals celebrated by members of your playgroup and talk about how families can share customs and activities
- Borrow dual language books from your library
- Share traditional games and toys used by families in your playgroup
- Purchase dolls with different skin tones
- Share traditional crafts
- Check the spelling of names when preparing name tags or writing playgroup lists. People like to know their name is recognised as important
- Ask families that speak languages other than English to teach the group a simple song in their first language
- Use role play, dress up, home play, language games, dance and movement from different cultures

For help to include families from different cultural backgrounds contact Playgroup WA on 1800 171 882 or email [hotline@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:hotline@playgroupwa.com.au).





### 5.4.2 Welcoming a family with an adult or child with a disability

Diversity is good for everybody in terms of learning and experience. Inclusion encourages children's awareness of individual differences and appreciation of the great diversity among people. It encourages empathy and understanding and provides a wider experience for all children; this is of benefit not just to the individual but to the wider community.

That doesn't make it easy for someone to walk into a room full of strangers wondering if they or their child with a disability will be accepted by the group. We all expect others to move and behave in certain ways and when they don't, that can lead to questions or concerns.

When welcoming a family with an adult or child with a disability talk with them and draw on their own experience and knowledge about theirs or their child's requirements.

Adults may need to support children's understanding of difference and to help them to accept differences in abilities. Here are some things to consider when explaining differences in abilities to children:

- Explore how everyone in your playgroup is different - who's big, little, old, young, has blonde or black hair, who likes or dislikes swings. Help children see that everyone is different and unique but stress the things we have in common. For example, "Kate can't talk yet but does like to hold your hand while you sing *Ring a Ring a Rosie*"
- Be ready to explain and intervene if other children are making unrealistic demands
- Encourage children when they interact well. Acknowledge a child's attempts to socialise by giving them a starting point for involvement. Suggest they sit and share a toy with the new child
- Encourage children to interact freely and answer their questions openly and honestly. Adults may introduce children to start off play, for example: "*Jenny can't see the blocks very well, but she can make towers with you*"

Here are some strategies for playgroups to consider that might help to create a more accessible and inclusive playgroup environment:

- Set up the environment to ensure that all children and adults are able to move around and play safely
- Use books and stories to help adults and children to understand disability
- If a family member has difficulty carrying out roster duties it may be helpful to ask them if they would like to be taken off these duties or if they would like to help out in other ways
- Be flexible when negotiating roles and responsibilities to families who have a parent or child with a disability
- Look at ways where physical access can be improved
- When hiring or leasing a building, contact the venue owner to explore the possibility of making changes to the venue to improve physical access

**Remember introducing children to a range of people with varying abilities can have life long benefits for the individual and the community.**

For help to include families with a family member with disabilities contact playgroup WA on 1800 171 882 or email [hotline@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:hotline@playgroupwa.com.au)

## 6 Organising Your Playgroup





## 6 Organising Your Playgroup

This section offers hints to help you organise your playgroup. There are tips for getting things done and organising the group, communication, structuring playgroup sessions and welcoming new families.

In general playgroups need two main systems to be set in place to ensure they run smoothly:

1. A method to get all tasks done
2. Ways to communicate effectively

### 6.1 What jobs need to be considered

To start with the playgroup needs to identify what jobs need to be done. These might include:

- Tasks relating to the venue - hiring or leasing a venue, collecting and storing keys, cleaning, safety and hygiene
- Purchasing, maintenance and storage of toys and playgroup equipment
- Administration and finances
- Supply and, preparation and clean-up of food for children and adults
- Packing away at the end of sessions
- Annual clean up and pack up for the year
- Promotion of the playgroup
- Fundraising
- Committee roles if applicable

#### **Go to Section 7.2.6. Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

Once the tasks have been identified decide how often they need to be completed. Some tasks will only need to be done weekly, some once a term and others once a year. The list can then be a great check list. If the group makes a list they can then use it to make sure the tasks are completed and all playgroup members can have input into ensuring they are achieved.

NOTE: Incorporated playgroups may enter into leases and as such will have other tasks that could include maintenance of the building, upkeep of outside areas and play equipment. This will depend on the type of lease the playgroup has with the venue owner. It is important to review the lease to be sure the group understands what is required of them.

### 6.2 Getting the job done

Once the group has identified what needs to get done they can begin planning how to delegate the jobs among the group members. How this is done will depend on each playgroup. Just remember to keep it as simple and effective as possible and that there is no right or wrong way.

That said the more the work is shared around, the more skills the group will have to draw on and the less like people will 'burn out'. Sharing the load can build a sense of ownership and empowerment within the group as everyone develops and uses their skills to run the playgroup together.

Try to avoid the "*I run the playgroup*" syndrome. That is one person who seems to do all the work and makes all the decisions. Playgroups are for everyone so trying to involve everyone is something to be worked towards. If a collective approach is not achieved it could result in:

- Those doing the work feeling overburdened and undervalued
- Burn out
- Other members feeling they have no role to play
- No one has developed the skills or interest to take over the management of the playgroup





From time to time sharing the workload among playgroup participants can cause concern and at times result in discontent if not dealt with promptly. Your playgroup may have an issue with sharing the workload if any of the following happen:

- Have you ever complained (or heard someone else in your playgroup complain) that no one will ever take on such-and-such a job and you're stuck with it again?
- Does it frequently happen that the person whose turn it is to organise an activity doesn't turn up?
- Do you find the toy clean-up roster sheet remains blank for weeks until the same four people as last year grudgingly turn up again and do all the work?
- Does your playgroup dread the AGM because no one volunteers to join the committee or become a session leader?

### 6.2.1 Some simple strategies to delegate the work

It is important to remember that lots of people have useful skills and experience and are happy to help out. So don't be afraid to ask for help. Sometimes people don't know that the workload is hard to manage by one or two people and are only too happy to take some of the load.

Asking for volunteers is a great place to start. Get everybody to tell the group what skills they have, what they are good at or like doing and then look at how the jobs can be matched to the people.

If the playgroup is large with multiple sessions having designated positions with role descriptions may be necessary. For example, the playgroup may decide to have session leaders and committee members to carry out some key tasks.

#### See 7.2.6 Committee Roles and Responsibilities.

Once you have a system in place it needs to be properly communicated to all the playgroup members and reviewed to ensure it is still the best way to get the job done.

**Rosters:** Rosters can be a helpful way of getting everyone involved and sharing the daily or weekly workload.

**Term roster:** This is in the form of a calendar planner. All playgroup sessions for the term are listed with the names of the members and their duties for each day. Copies may be given to each member so they can keep track and arrange swaps if they are unable to attend on their roster day.

**Duty list or cards:** A list of jobs or set of cards is made up with all the necessary weekly playgroup jobs. Each member can add their name to the duty list or if using cards can either be given or take a card as they arrive that indicates their duty for that day.

Weekly routines such as opening up, setting up, preparing children's and adults' snacks, clearing away equipment, sweeping and vacuuming the room and taking home the washing can all be included.

When setting up roster systems consider:

- Who is responsible for drawing up and distributing the roster?
- What is the arrangement for someone who cannot attend?
- Informal arrangements if someone is caught up such as feeding or changing a baby, handling a distressed child, etc, and unable to help
- Where and how the roster should be displayed
- Do additional tasks need to be added or some jobs removed from the roster?
- Reviewing it at the end of each term to make sure it's working
- If some activities are done in a very particular way, such as painting, setting up morning tea or putting away equipment, roster new members with someone who has done the task before
- The idea of rosters and the expectation that certain tasks will be carried out at certain times may be new to some people. They may need a gentle prompt from the session leader or welcoming person about taking their turn

## Setting up and packing away

Few playgroups have the luxury of a purpose built room. For most playgroups, play experiences need to be set up and packed away within the playgroup time. Some routines and considerations playgroups have found effective:

- Each member takes a turn in setting up and choosing what to put out
- Shelves and containers are well labelled to help with the setting up and packing away process
- Depending on the venue and the type of activities the playgroup is planning it may be helpful to have designated areas for different types of activities e.g. a wet area for painting and messy play or a quiet corner for reading
- Some groups involve children in both setting up and packing away. It may slow down the process but the responsibility and ownership of the playgroup by the children is considered important
- Setting up and packing away is rostered

## Sharing the load

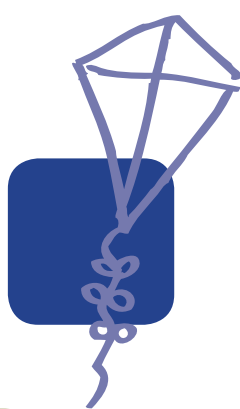
Everybody will get more out of their playgroup experience by being involved.

To help make it easier for people to get involved make sure the playgroup has discussed what the expectations are around the role of families at playgroup to ensure these shared and understood by everyone.

Playgroups that want to encourage participation might like to consider some of the following ideas:

- Increase the number of designated roles with less work involved for each one. Introduce informal roles for small or short term tasks
- Change session leaders and/or fee collectors every term to involve more people
- Make some jobs or roles short term so members don't feel daunted by taking something on
- Approach people directly to ask them to carry out a task. People may not always respond well to notices on notice boards and prefer direct communication
- Ensure the workload is evenly spread. Playgroups are voluntary, non-profit community groups set up for the mutual benefit of all the members. No-one should be committed to hours and hours of work every week
- Social events can be a great way to help build a feeling of membership and belonging. The playgroup might consider hosting a coffee morning away from playgroup or an evening out without the children





## 6.3 Communication

Playgroup is about teamwork and goes hand in hand with effective communication. Playgroup members need to understand what the group's expectations are and when there are changes to requirements.

Keeping everybody informed and involved with decision making will build a sense of group ownership and a cooperative playgroup environment and involves good listening skills and clear messages.

It's important to keep the lines of communication open and take the time to allow the group to talk about planning and activities. If you are a member of a playgroup committee it's important to take the time to talk with all of the members at some time during the session. This will help people to feel valued and included.

Communication is more complicated but also more important the larger the playgroup. The following are some strategies your playgroup may like to consider when planning lines of communication:

- Use technology as your friend. Many playgroups use group emails and Facebook to have virtual conversations
- Have a playgroup website or newsletters to communicate with members and promote the playgroup
- Keep people informed and in the loop through a noticeboard or communications book at the playgroup venue

## 6.4 Adding sessions

As playgroups grow and attract new members, you may like to consider offering additional sessions.

New sessions might be required when:

- The existing session has become too large
- There are sufficient families on a waiting list
- There is a need for a choice of days, times or styles
- New families joining such as a group of families who already know each other and wish to start their own session
- There is an interest in establishing special interest sessions for groups such as babies, dads, families from different cultural or language backgrounds, three-year olds

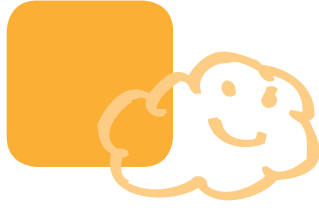
### 6.4.1 Introducing new sessions to the playgroup

It is important to make sure that when a new session is added that the families are given all the information they need to establish their session. They will also need to know about the practical aspects of being part of your playgroup including your policies and procedures.

A good way to do this is to develop a simple induction pack or check list so that everyone knows what information the new families need and nothing gets forgotten.

Some things you may want to consider including in your induction pack:

- Details on the committee and people to contact if they have any questions
- Housekeeping duties
- Committee meeting schedule
- Guidelines on reporting issues such as broken toys and venue concerns
- The policies and procedures of the playgroup
- Playgroup WA membership services including eNews, the website address and other member communications
- Details on how to contact Playgroup WA if they need support and where they can find the Playgroup WA Manual online



### Advantages of multi-session playgroups

Multi-session playgroups enjoy a number of benefits including the following:

- Administration and management tasks are done centrally by one committee
- More choice can be provided
- Costs of running the playgroup can be spread over more families
- More negotiating power with local government and building owners
- More families to take on Management Committee roles and to share the load



### How do multi-session playgroups work?

Ideally each session should be free to function according to its needs, values and wishes but in keeping with the overall philosophy of the playgroup. It is important to ensure that decision making and communication remains open and includes everyone.

When a playgroup operates more than one session:

- Make sure each session has at least one representative on the Management Committee
- Put procedures in place for collecting money - for example, have a fee collector in each session
- Appoint a session leader to co-ordinate activities such as welcoming new families, arranging rosters and circulating information to the session members
- Decide how fundraising, cleaning, maintenance, busy bees and other joint activities can best be managed
- Use notice boards or pigeon hole arrangements to ensure that all sessions have access to relevant information, newsletters, notices etc
- Make sure that committee decisions, information and announcements are communicated to all sessions

Make sure you update the playgroup membership details either via the portal or by emailing [hotline@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:hotline@playgroupwa.com.au) if you start a new session and complete a membership update form. You will need to nominate someone from each session to be a mail contact so that they can receive and distribute information from Playgroup WA within their sessions.

## 7 Managing Your Playgroup

“The key activities of the committee include planning, organising and leading the playgroup”

## 7 Managing your playgroup

For a playgroup to run well it needs a little organising behind the scenes. How this is done won't be the same for every playgroup.

A single session playgroup with just a few families rarely needs a formal committee and formal meetings may not be necessary because decisions can be made at playgroup. Decisions can be made as a group or you may decide to designate individual's roles as coordinator, treasurer, or contact person. These decisions are entirely up to the group.

If the playgroup grows with more families and playgroup sessions, managing the playgroup will need some more formal processes for making decisions and keeping everybody informed. It may even be necessary to form a committee and ask some members to take on some specific tasks. The group may decide there are some benefits to being incorporated; in which case a committee will be necessary.

### 7.1 Advice for one session playgroups

In this section on managing playgroups there is a lot of information that will not apply to smaller playgroups that may have only one session and three or four families. As a small playgroup most of the planning and decision-making can happen at playgroup and as long as everyone is present then communication won't be an issue for you either.

When we talk about playgroup committees we are simply talking about an elected group of parents and caregivers who volunteer to organise the management of the playgroup on behalf of the members. If committee sounds too formal for your playgroup then you can simply call it an organising group.

When you read this section of the Manual you need to keep in mind your own playgroup needs and ignore the parts that don't apply to you. In some cases it may be that there are useful ideas but you need to adapt them to your own group's needs. When it comes to playgroups it is definitely the case that 'one size does not fit all'.

### 7.2 The Playgroup Committee

A playgroup committee is a group of parents/caregivers appointed to manage the playgroup on behalf of the members. That still means that each playgroup member has equal rights.

The committee members volunteer their time and expertise and should be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses for example postage, stationary and phone calls.

#### 7.2.1 Forming a Playgroup Committee

When setting up a committee be clear about:

- Its function
- Powers
- What decisions it can make regarding the running of each session
- What policies are necessary
- How every committee member can be heard
- How decisions are communicated back to the broader playgroup members.

The committee will usually consist of a president, secretary, treasurer and a representative from each playgroup session. Other positions may include vice-president, enrolment officer, a contact person, fundraising co-ordinator and purchasing officer.

You may not need all these positions and some roles can be combined. Choose only the positions that will best serve your playgroup. Remember keep it as simple as you can.

If your playgroup is incorporated you will need to refer to your constitution to check if there are any requirements around committee size and positions.

**Go to section 7.7 Incorporations and Constitutions for more information.**



### 7.2.2 Committee size

The size of the committee will vary according to the size and needs of the playgroup. The following points are useful in considering the size of your committee:

- Committees that are too big can result in lengthy meeting times and difficulties in reaching decisions
- Everyone on the committee needs to feel useful and needed
- There are a few key positions that you will need and a range of other positions that you may wish to consider to help with the running of the playgroup
- Multi-session playgroups would ideally have representatives from each session on the committee if possible
- If it is not possible for representatives from each session on the committee, think about alternative ways to include session feedback and concerns at meetings

### 7.2.3 Recruiting committee members

Recruiting members for the playgroup committee can be hard, families' lives are becoming very busy and having time to be on a committee can be difficult. Here are some ideas to help:

- Provide clear information about the jobs and tasks involved
- Consider ways of recruiting throughout the year
- Ask each committee member to actively recruit their replacement
- Acknowledge contributions and show appreciation for member's efforts
- Approach parents or caregivers who could do the job
- Invite prospective members to attend a committee meeting
- Have a nomination system; many people are too shy to put their own name forward

- Consider making it mandatory that each session has one representative on the committee
- If people can't commit for a year try shorter periods on a roster system
- Use incentives - for example discounted fees or first choice of sessions
- Make meetings friendly and welcoming

If you have a committee member resign try to find out the reasons and take the opportunity to review the operation of the committee. Inform members of the vacancy and invite nominations. Once recruited provide them with the information and support they need for the role.

### 7.2.4 Keeping your committee members

Once you have a committee it is important to work in ways that encourage them to continue in their role on the committee.

- Respect and support each other; share the workload evenly
- Don't let any position become so big that no one wants to take it over
- Don't try to do too much, only take on what is reasonable and achievable
- Find ways to show you value each person's contribution. For example a morning tea for committee members, flowers, a small gift if appropriate, or an end of year committee night out to reward yourselves
- Have fun!







### 7.2.5 Replacing a committee member

For a variety of reasons members of playgroup committees may resign. If this happens:

- Thank them for their contribution
- If the reason for resigning is not clear, talk to the resigning member to see if there is anything that might encourage them to remain on the committee
- Take the opportunity to review the operation of your committee and to make changes where appropriate
- Check the playgroup policies and procedures to see if there are any guidelines you need to follow
- Inform members of the vacancy and invite nominations to fill the position. If you have more than one nomination the committee will need to determine a process for voting to fill the vacant position
- Ensure that the new committee member is provided with information about the role and duties of their new position

**If your playgroup is incorporated check your constitution to find out what you need to do to replace a committee member.**

### 7.2.6 Committee roles and responsibilities

Committees work best when the workload is shared. Allocating key tasks to specific members is a good way to ensure that the important tasks of the playgroup are carried out and that someone is responsible for coordinating each of the key areas. It also helps to ensure that people don't 'burn out' and that the work is shared fairly. Ideally, everyone needs to work together to help other committee members when needed. Playgroups where the committee duties are shared among the group and just done by one or two people will have a much better chance at success and longevity.

Playgroups vary and so the committee structures required by different playgroups will also vary.

### Key committee positions

The committee will generally consist of a president, secretary, treasurer and enrolment officer. If the playgroup has multiple sessions it is a good idea to have a representative from each session as part of the committee as well. This helps to ensure all sessions are kept informed and are represented in decision-making.

Managing the activities of the playgroup involves different tasks and often members outside the committee have skills and expertise that can be valuable to committees. Inviting those members to help with specific tasks can help to reduce the workload of the committee members, help make members feel valued and included and ultimately ensure the success of the playgroup.

At the end of the day, it is up to each playgroup to decide what roles they need for their playgroup and how they want their committee to work.

Information about the roles, duties and responsibilities of key committee positions are included below.

#### President

- Spokesperson and motivator for the playgroup
- Chairperson for committee meetings
- Liaises with and on behalf of all playgroup sessions
- Often a signatory on playgroup bank accounts
- Keeps lines of communication open between members
- Ensures decision-making is democratic
- Is familiar with the policies of the playgroup

*If the playgroup is incorporated the President will also:*

- *Be familiar with their playgroup constitution*
- *Prepare a written report for the Annual General Meeting if required*
- *Ensure an annual financial report is provided to the playgroup members*



### Vice President

- Assists and supports the President
- Chairs meetings if the President is absent
- Takes on responsibilities as requested by the President

### Secretary

- Responsible for documents and records
- Takes minutes at meetings
- Lists all correspondence received in the minutes
- Distributes minutes as soon as possible after the meeting
- Prepares action sheet for who and what is to be done as decided by the committee
- Sets agendas with the President
- Reads important letters at meetings when requested
- Notes all correspondence and keeps it on file
- Replies to correspondence as directed by the committee
- Notifies all members of meeting times and dates
- Distributes information to the playgroup members as required

This role will be made a lot easier if the Secretary has ready access to computer and internet facilities. If this is not possible then documents can be hand-written as long as they are clear and easily photocopied.

### Treasurer

- Plans and reviews the budget in consultation with other committee members
- Collects all money, including fees and fundraising
- Presents a financial statement of all incoming and outgoing monies at committee meetings
- Keeps financial records, ledgers, bank books, cheque books and receipt books current
- Should read and be familiar with all money-related sections of this manual
- Answers questions about the financial report and comments on the current financial status of the playgroup
- Contributes to discussion and advises in relation to plans and purchases planned

*If the playgroup is incorporated the Treasurer may also:*

- Be required to arrange an audited statement of income and expenditure for the Annual General Meeting

***Go to section 7.7 Incorporation and constitutions for more information***

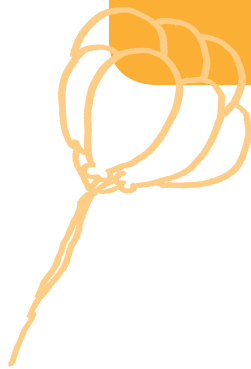
### Session Leader/Representative

- Represents views of their playgroup session at meetings
- Feeds back information to their playgroup session
- Attends committee meetings or sends a representative

In addition, Session Leaders will also:

- Welcome new members/visitors to their playgroup session
- Plans rosters for tasks at playgroup sessions
- Collect fees to pass on to the Treasurer or Enrolment Officer
- Keep a playgroup session attendance register

To help spread the workload this role can be shared by two people attending the same session. In this way no one person need feel pressured to attend every session.



### Enrolment Officer

- Needs to have voicemail, an answering machine or mobile phone
- Keeps a list of all families attending playgroup sessions
- Allocates families to playgroup sessions at the beginning of each year
- Keeps membership even across sessions
- Keeps names and phone numbers of families on waiting lists or refers them on to other playgroups or to Playgroup WA
- Ensures enrolment forms are filled in
- Recommends when new sessions need to be started
- Is the phone contact, therefore the first contact for new families who want to enrol

Some playgroups also include the following positions:

- Fee collector
- Purchasing officer
- Publicity officer
- Fundraising coordinator
- Maintenance officer

For information about the roles, duties and responsibilities of these positions, call the Playgroup WA Hotline on 1800 171 882.



### 7.2.7 Effective committee meetings

Meetings are necessary to ensure the success of the playgroup's operations. They should be open to all members, not just those on the committee. All members need to leave a meeting feeling they have contributed, clearly understood decisions made and are committed to completing tasks they have been delegated.

Meetings are held to:

- Share information
- Raise issues
- Make and evaluate policies and set up systems
- Plan events and programs
- Hear views and make decisions
- Address problems and resolve conflict
- Support all playgroup sessions
- Share work load and responsibilities
- Monitor finances
- Get consensus

## 7.2.8 Planning meetings

Playgroup members are volunteers and their time and energy is too valuable to waste on ineffective and unnecessary meetings. So it is important to decide how often meetings are needed, where and when they should be held and how long they should be. The meeting also needs to be planned with a clear agenda so everyone knows what will be discussed and they can come prepared.

It is also a good idea to ask committee members to RSVP their availability for meetings. There is nothing more frustrating than arriving for a meeting to find there is not enough people present to get the work done.

### 7.2.8.1 Frequency of meetings

A number of factors will influence how often meetings are held. In general, meetings should be held as often as is necessary to encourage maximum participation and communication and to get things done. A meeting once a month or once a term may be sufficient for your playgroup to operate effectively.

Smaller, single-session playgroups may not need formal meetings as discussion can take place less formally during the session. Larger, multi-session playgroups usually need to hold more formal meetings to make plans for the playgroup.

It is always a good idea to hold an end of year meeting. In a small one session playgroup this might involve a planning session during the playgroup session followed by a social event. For larger playgroups there may be more specific tasks that need doing, such as confirming committee membership for the next year.

Incorporated playgroups will be required to hold an Annual General Meeting.

If your playgroup is incorporated you will need to check the playgroup's constitution to find out how many meetings the playgroup must have a year and the rules around the Annual General Meeting.

**For more information go to  
Section 7.7.3 Annual General Meetings.**

### 7.2.8.2 Setting meeting agendas

An agenda is simply a list of things that the committee needs to decide on, plan and discuss. It is a good idea to prioritise the business on the agenda to make sure that you get through all the urgent business.

An agenda:

- Is usually set by the president and secretary
- Allows all members to contribute
- Is distributed well before meetings
- Gives all members the opportunity to prepare for the meeting
- Is followed step-by-step at the meeting

An agenda will include:

- A numbered list of things to be done/discussed
- Unresolved or continuing issues from the previous minutes
- New issues with additional background reading if needed
- Simple issues to resolve first
- All details of the meeting, i.e. the Chairperson, date, time, place

Items that might be included in an agenda:

- Note who is present and any apologies
- Minutes from the previous meeting
- Business arising from the previous minutes
- Items that require decisions
- Items for discussion
- Reports (these might include a general update from the Chair, Financial report, playgroup session reports and other subcommittees or office holders)
- Correspondence
- Any other business



#### *7.2.8.3 How many committee members need to be present to make decisions*

Each playgroup must decide on the number of committee members needed at each meeting in order to have decisions passed. This needs to be a standard policy so that meetings can be rescheduled if there will not be enough committee members available.

If the playgroup is incorporated you will need to check your playgroup's constitution for guidelines on how many members are needed to make up a meeting. This is called a 'quorum' and generally requires half the committee members plus one. No quorum - no meeting.

### **7.2.9 Principles of meetings**

There are some general things that all committee members need to keep in mind when attending meetings.

- Participate in discussions and decision-making
- Discuss the issues and don't let it become personal
- Discussion about individual adults and children is inappropriate and can be hurtful and disruptive
- Maintaining confidentiality is important
- Allow others to have the opportunity to have a say
- Contribute ideas and proposals for the playgroup to discuss and consider
- Takes on tasks as decided by the committee

### **Some practical tips for running meetings**

Simply gathering committee members together at a specified date and place will not, by itself, guarantee a productive, successful meeting. The following tips may be useful for achieving successful meetings:

1. Notice of meeting and agenda out early
2. Minutes from previous meeting available to committee members to read prior to meetings
3. Set start and finishing times
4. Set up room early
5. Have extra agendas available
6. The Chairperson keeps meeting running smoothly and to time
7. Decisions are made and responsibilities delegated

#### *7.2.9.1 Chairing the meeting*

The chairperson, usually the President, makes sure that meetings are informative, productive and properly run and managed. The Chairperson's role includes:

- Deciding what should be on the agenda
- Starting and ending the meeting on time
- Welcoming and introducing visitors and new members
- Keeping the meeting running smoothly
- Making sure that everyone is clear about their role in the meeting, what the meeting procedures are and how decisions will be taken
- Encouraging everyone to follow the agenda and keeps discussion relevant to the agenda item being discussed
- Ensuring that discussion and decision making is not dominated by a few people

- Participating but not dominating the discussion
- Ensuring that motions are relevant and clearly understood
- Controlling the debate - decide who can speak and in what order
- Keeping speakers to the point and to the allotted time
- Closing debate - when it is considered that sufficient discussion has taken place
- Making sure that consensus is reached, that a vote is taken when necessary and that decisions are minuted correctly
- Summarising and clarifying each decision as to who will carry out the action and in what time frame
- Acknowledges and shows appreciation for all work done
- Checking that someone is taking the minutes

### 7.2.10 Taking meeting minutes

Minutes are the official permanent record of a meeting. They are a brief, formal written summary of what happened at a meeting and are generally recorded by the Secretary.

Minutes:

- Include the date, time and venue of the meeting
- State who attended and apologies
- Follow the agenda's format
- Outline in brief the main points of the discussion
- Give an accurate concise account of decisions reached and approved payments
- Include any actions required and the name of the person taking responsibility for the action and when it is expected to be completed

Meeting minutes are:

- Accepted (or ratified) at the next meeting
- Signed off by the president

Hints for recording minutes:

- Try to capture only the basic ideas and the essence of what was discussed
- Check details and ask for clarification if you are unsure of an issue
- Use clear, simple language
- Use abbreviations
- Ask someone to take the minutes for you if you want to actively participate in a discussion
- Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting
- Keep any notes you took at the meeting until the minutes have been confirmed at the next meeting







Attendance records are required for insurance purposes it is important that the playgroup keeps a record of which families actually attended each session. You can use either an attendance sheet, kept in a file, or an attendance book.

Attendance records need to include the following information:

- Date
- Names of all adults and children, including babies, attending
- Arrival times and departure
- Names of any visitors
- Signature of each family who attended the session

Records may be scanned and saved electronically or to disc. This will require some process around storing records and handover to new members or committees.

### How long do we need to keep records?

Membership and attendance records should be kept for a minimum 30 years.

**Go to section 8.5 Financial Records for information on financial record keeping.**

## 7.3 Keeping records

Good documentation is the key to a well-run playgroup. Someone needs to take responsibility for having the following current and available to all members:

- Attendance records and enrolment forms  
**Click here for example templates**
- Financial records  
**Go to section 8.5 Financial Records for more information**
- Accident, incident or injury records  
**Click here for example templates**
- Minutes of meetings and correspondence
- Equipment inventory (if appropriate) - a detailed list of all your equipment and furniture. An inventory provides information about what equipment is owned by the playgroup and how old it is. The inventory is used for insurance claims and should be kept up to date.



## 7.4 Annual handover

Checklist and handy hints to finish the year on a high.

### 7.4.1 Handover checklist

As the year draws to a close it is a good idea to plan a 'wind up' meeting for the year to hand over records, bank details and change account signatories. If the playgroup is incorporated it is a good idea to arrange a meeting for the outgoing playgroup committee to hand over to the incoming committee soon after your annual general meeting when the new committee positions have been determined.

Handover checklist:

- At the handover meeting, allow time for outgoing people to hand over relevant written information to their replacement
- The President/Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer and anyone else with a designated position should include a clear job description
- The Treasurer needs to be sure all finances are in order. They may consider getting someone to audit the books if this was not done prior to the AGM
- If the forms for changing signatories at the bank have not yet been completed, this meeting is a good time to do so
- Incoming committee members need an opportunity to talk about the job and ask questions
- List the names, addresses and phone numbers of both outgoing and incoming committee members
- Use the opportunity to discuss briefly an overview of the year ahead including possible events
- Celebrate the success of the past year and acknowledge the efforts of volunteers in your playgroup
- Set a date for the new committee's first meeting

### 7.4.2 Handover information

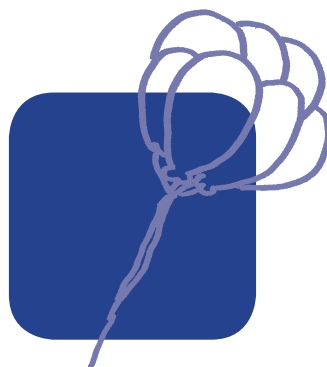
Make sure the following items are explained to the new committee and handed over to them.

- All financial records
- Inventory of equipment
- Accident and injury book
- Playgroup WA membership information
- Playgroup WA insurance information
- Hall or venue details, key arrangements, contact names and numbers
- Playgroup policies, guidelines and information pamphlets
- A file containing any useful resource material such as activity ideas, outings and events information, fundraising flyers and useful contacts
- Minutes of meetings
- Past applications for grants
- Relevant correspondence

If your playgroup is incorporated you will also need to ensure the new committee have been given a copy of:

- Incorporation certificate
- The playgroup constitution

Some of this information can be photocopied so it can go into the files of individual committee members.





### 7.4.3 Finishing the year well

- Clean out the playgroup cupboards
- Update the equipment inventory
- Discard broken toys, old playdough and other perishables
- Wash paint smocks, dress-ups, tea towels and hand towels
- Disinfect baby toys
- Re-label shelves and equipment as necessary
- Top up supplies
- List items to be bought next year
- Make sure you allocate sufficient funds for the new committee to meet any expenditure required early in the new year

### 7.5 Closing a playgroup

For a variety of reasons playgroups may need to consider closing. Playgroups are encouraged to explore other options before deciding to close and to discuss the matter widely within the playgroup before any decision is made. The decision to close should be supported by all of the members.



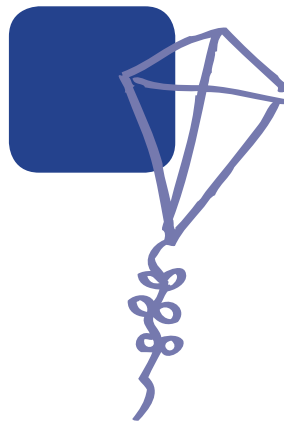
The following points may help you in exploring issues before you reach a final decision:

Closing due to lack of numbers:

- First, contact Playgroup WA - we may be able to refer new members to your playgroup and help promote your playgroup
- Next look at ways to promote the playgroup
- Try and negotiate a more affordable rent with the building owners
- Take a serious, honest look at your playgroup to see if there are internal problems that are causing members to go elsewhere
- Identify any changes that are needed
- Consider joining another playgroup with a day or a session that you can take over (your Playgroup WA membership will carry over with you to the new playgroup)
- Become a home playgroup and meet in each other's homes until the numbers pick up

Closing due to lack of volunteers for the Management Committee:

- Contact Playgroup WA - we can help!
- Consider a more informal style of management
- Discuss the issue with the playgroup members
- Consider the reasons why members won't volunteer and identify things that can be changed
- Approach individual members and ask for their support?



### 7.5.1 Closing down process

Once the decision to close the playgroup has been reached you will need to undertake the following tasks:

- Advise Playgroup WA of the decision to close
- Finalise all paperwork and ensure all financial records are up-to-date
- Pay outstanding debts and close the bank account if the playgroup has one
- If incorporated follow the playgroup's constitution - clauses covering dissolution of the playgroup
- If incorporated contact the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety for advice about the formal procedures to be followed
- Inform any other community groups with whom the playgroup has links
- Decide how to keep the long term playgroup records

It is recommended that incorporated playgroups contact the **Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** on 1300 30 40 54.

#### Records

Different types of records need to be kept for different periods of time even when a playgroup closes. The following points need to be considered when storing records:

- Playgroups need to keep their membership records for a minimum of 30 years
- For insurance purposes it is important to keep attendance records
- Records should include details of past members and the minutes and financial records of the playgroup for the past seven years
- Records need to be stored (bound and sealed) for safekeeping. For ease of storage, you could scan documents and save to an external hard or thumb drive but we recommend at least two copies be made and stored independently.

### Distribution of equipment and assets

All the money, assets and equipment belong to the playgroup. They do not belong to the committee. The following issues need to be considered:

- Fixtures to the building including light fittings, built-in heaters, fences, fixed play equipment become part of the building and cannot be taken
- See if the equipment can be stored to enable the playgroup to start up again at a future date
- Keep an inventory of the playgroup's equipment and record what has been stored and where, or how it has been distributed
- If the playgroup has toys or equipment purchased through a grant check the conditions of the grant to confirm how they should be appropriately dispersed
- If the playgroup is incorporated equipment and funds belonging to the playgroup must be given to a community group with similar objectives such as another playgroup or a non-profit organisation. Check your playgroup's constitution
- Contact Playgroup WA for information about playgroups in need of toys and equipment
- Try to organise a farewell event, especially if your playgroup has been operating for a long time. Whatever the reason for closing, it will help remaining members if their last memories of the playgroup are happy and positive ones

## 7.6 Policies and procedures

Try to think of policies as your friends, to help you manage your playgroup sessions. Policies are simply a way of ensuring your playgroup members know what is expected and how the playgroup operates. Policies can actually be a great help; especially at challenging times when there may be differences between how playgroup members believe things should be done.

A policy is simply a formal written playgroup statement agreed to by all members. Your playgroup might prefer to call them guidelines, agreements, expectations, constitution, rules, philosophies or code of conduct.

A playgroup can have informal agreements such as a sign asking 'Please keep children out of the kitchen' or agreements reached by a show of hands over a cup of tea at children's snack time.

Policies are best made at the beginning of the year. To change policies midway through the year takes a lot of care and sensitivity to be sure that all families have contributed to the process and are committed to the results. They are also of little value unless people know and understand why they were made. Communicate and publish rules often, especially to new members.

Making sure you provide opportunities for all your members to be involved in setting the policies and in the reviewing process will mean that everyone has ownership of them. Putting a date on policies is a great idea to remind you when you last looked at it.

Just remember to make your policies relevant and workable for your playgroup. And keep them simple!

Policies are there to make your life easier, if you remember this it makes the time invested in creating them much more worthwhile.



### 7.6.1 Playgroup philosophy

Brainstorm all the reasons why families attend playgroup to develop an overall philosophy for your playgroup.

Remember a brainstorm means everyone's contribution is welcome and accepted; there are no right or wrong responses. No comments are allowed about anyone else's contribution.

Ask each adult to indicate three to five points they feel most strongly about or that they believe best describes the type of playgroup they want to be a part of. Collate responses and make a few strong, overall statements from the results.

Be sure all families are comfortable with the final statements before formally adopting them at a committee meeting.

### 7.6.2 Making playgroup policies

To develop policies for your playgroup, look at all the reasons why families attend playgroup and decide whether you need rules, policies or procedures to guide the group. Consider the needs of both children and adults.

The following points are important to remember when developing policies:

- The process should include the opportunity for all the members to have input, particularly if the policy is likely to be contentious or cause conflict
- Keep the points to the minimum necessary to establish the actions required
- Policies should be fair and non-discriminatory (you might like to use the Playgroup WA Charter as a guide)
- Base your policies on common sense
- Policies need to reflect the needs and the wellbeing of the whole playgroup
- Policies should be clear and easily understood by all of the members
- Policies need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the playgroup and its members



### 7.6.3 Writing policies

Clearly define your policies and let all members know how and where they are listed. Write your draft policy in simple positive language and distribute to all members for comment. Outline member's responsibilities and clearly indicate their rights and your group's expectations. It's a good idea to give a date when all feedback needs to be returned to the committee and that the members understand that after that date the committee will be finalising the policy.

A policy should include:

- A definition of the issue
- Principles it raises
- The playgroup's commitment to the issue
- Strategies and actions to minimise risks or concerns
- Responsibilities of parents and caregivers
- Responsibilities of playgroup management

### 7.6.4 Implementing policies

Once the playgroup members have had an opportunity to give feedback on draft policies and they have been finalised you can formalise the policy at a committee or playgroup meeting.

The playgroup members then need to be informed and new members will need to know what the policies of the playgroup are. To keep everybody informed you might consider:

- Including information about playgroup policies in an introduction kit/letter
- Send a copy of the policies by email to families
- Have a copy of policies available at playgroup sessions
- Use posters to remind members about important policies
- Send an annual update on policies

It's important to make sure that what happens at playgroup is consistent with the playgroup policies. Policies won't work on their own and need to be implemented to be effective.

### 7.6.5 Suggested policies

Each playgroup needs to decide what policies are necessary. The following types of policies may be relevant for your playgroup:

- Enrolment, waiting lists and attendance
- Fees and charges
- Smoking
- Health and safety
- Supervision of children
- Handling conflict/grievances
- SunSmart
- Shared equipment
- Immunisation and infectious disease
- Snack time
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Food handling



### 7.6.6 Procedures

Think of procedures as a guideline or instructions to help you maintain smooth running of your playgroup and playgroup sessions. These could include setting up, packing away, collecting fees and housekeeping. Make sure you have them displayed and give copies to all your members so everyone knows what to do.

They differ from policies in that they outline the specific steps or processes that need to be followed in particular situations. Procedures are:

- Instructions on how to do something e.g. setting up and packing away, locking up, collecting fees
- Informal practices for the day-to-day housekeeping of the group
- Designed to create a comfortable, friendly, workable environment for playgroup members

Procedures can be:

- Placed on a notice board or included in the playgroup's handout to new members
- Reviewed regularly and changed by the members/committee as required

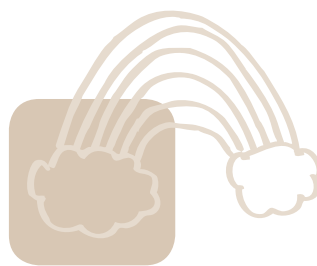
### 7.7 Incorporation and Constitutions

Incorporation is the joining of a number of individuals into one legally recognised body, an incorporated association. An incorporation is separate from the individual members. Put another way, the association is considered at law to have a distinct identity that continues regardless of changes to the membership. Playgroups can incorporate under the Associations Incorporation Act. The Act provides a cheap, simple way of establishing a legal entity that has the capacity to function in its own right.

The decision to become incorporated is one that needs to be discussed widely within the playgroup. There are some costs involved and specific processes that need to be followed.

It is recommended that groups contact the **Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** on 1300 30 40 54.





### 7.7.1 Why become incorporated

If your playgroup:

- Has several playgroup sessions run by a committee, incorporation provides greater legal protection for group members, particularly for those most involved e.g. the committee or group leaders
- Leases or owns premises
- Wishes to apply for grants of more than \$5000 (some local governments will only give grants to playgroups that are incorporated)
- Enters contracts
- Employs staff
- Needs to be incorporated as a requirement for using a venue

### 7.7.2 Constitution and Rules

Incorporated groups are required to have a constitution. A constitution is a set of written rules by which the association (your playgroup) is governed. Your playgroup committee follows the principles in the rules to operate the playgroup.

Having a set of written rules means that all members know how the playgroup should operate. It sets out procedures to be followed and helps make decision making easier.

Monitor your constitution to keep it relevant. The procedure for making changes is set down in your constitution. Changes must be lodged as prescribed in the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 and the appropriate fee paid.

The **Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** is available for further information and assistance on 1300 30 40 54.

### 7.7.3 Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is:

- A public meeting where the playgroup committee is accountable for playgroup management for the previous year
- A condition of incorporation
- Held according to rules set down in the playgroup's constitution
- Ideally held at the same time each year

The playgroup's constitution usually identifies specific requirements regarding notice of the meeting. It's a good idea to give plenty of notice of the AGM to make sure that everyone in the playgroup knows about it and has the opportunity to attend.

The following issues are usually dealt with at the AGM:

- Report from the President on activities during the past year
- Treasurer's report on the financial position of the playgroup and/or presentation of the audited financial report (if required)
- Election of committee members (playgroup that are incorporated should check their constitution for rules on committee membership and appointment)
- Appointment of an auditor (if required)
- General business - usually only urgent matters that cannot wait until the next meeting





#### 7.7.3.1 Nominating for committee positions

The playgroup's constitution will outline specific requirements about the nomination and election process. Usually nominations are called for at the AGM, however many groups advertise the positions and call for nominations prior to the AGM. Members can nominate themselves or be nominated by another member. Nominations usually require someone to "second" them (that is to support the nomination).

If there is only one nomination for a position, the person is elected unopposed. In the event that there is more than one nomination for a position a vote or ballot may be necessary.

Following the AGM, provide the playgroup members with information about the new committee members and their respective roles.

NOTE: Each incorporated body will have different rules around committee membership and nominations. It is always best to check the constitution before the AGM.

#### 7.7.3.2 Encouraging members to attend the AGM

People are often reluctant to attend the AGM but it is important that as many members as possible attend. Encourage members to attend the AGM. The following suggestion may be useful:

- Combine the AGM with the enrolment night
- Invite a guest speaker
- Arrange a crèche facility
- Make the AGM a social event - include supper or drinks and nibbles
- Have a door prize
- Approach members in person prior to the AGM
- Ensure that members know they can attend even if they are unable to take on a committee role

## 7.8 Occupational Health and Safety and Incorporation

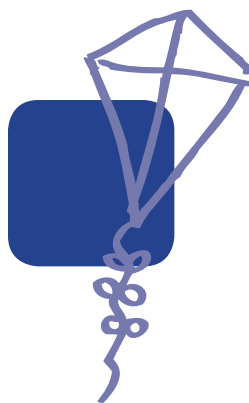
The Associations Incorporation Act 2015 details the responsibilities groups need to follow in relation to employment of staff, contracting services and volunteers.

The **Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** is available for further information and assistance on 1300 30 40 54.

## 8 Money Matters

“All playgroup members have a vested interest in the financial integrity of its income, expenditure and assets whether the playgroup has a Committee or not.”





## 8 Money Matters

No matter how small a playgroup is, there will need to be some basic financial and administration processes, such as records on money collected and spent.

For a playgroup with just three or four families, a petty cash box may be all that is required.

**For more information go to Section 8.4 Petty cash.**

If the playgroup has a large number of members and multiple sessions then there may need to be more formalised systems in place.

The following information is to assist playgroups to work out what financial procedures they need and how to they can put them in place.

### 8.1 Responsible money practices

All playgroup members have a vested interest in the financial integrity of its income, expenditure and assets whether the playgroup has a committee or not.

The playgroup or playgroup committee is responsible for keeping the playgroup financially viable. It makes decisions on:

- Developing a budget
- Setting fees and fee policies
- Determining if fundraising is necessary
- Being accountable for the playgroup's financial commitments
- Appointing a treasurer as appropriate

Where there is a Treasurer it is their responsibility for maintaining accurate and accessible financial records.

**Go to Section 7.2.6 Committee Roles and Responsibilities for details on the Treasurer's role.**

### 8.2 Income

It's important to have in place effective procedures for collecting fees and other forms of income and for handling the playgroup's money. It can save a lot of stress, worry and conflict if appropriate procedures are developed and implemented by the playgroup or playgroup committee.

#### Handling money

The following recommendations may be useful:

- Issue receipts (duplicate or triplicate) for all amounts received. One copy is given to the member paying the money, the other stays in the book and provides a clear account of money paid, by whom, what it was for, and the date it was paid
- If the playgroup has a bank account, cash should be banked as soon as possible
- Consider the best place to store cash if it not possible to get to a bank
- Don't leave cash in a car
- When banking deposit money intact - do not take money out of cash in hand to pay expenses. Bank it first, that way it is easier to match income to banking receipts
- Record proceeds from fundraising separately from general banking of fees so that accurate information is maintained about income and expenditure associated with fundraising activities
- Maintain a fee register. In small playgroups this may be a simple log listing members and payments and kept in a petty cash tin
- Where the playgroup has a large number of members it is advisable to issue itemised accounts to playgroup families to advise them the total amount owing and the due date
- If the playgroup has multiple sessions nominate fee collectors in each session to collect fees and other income. The fee collectors issue receipts to members on receiving payment and then forward the money collected to the Treasurer or nominated person with the relevant information advising how much has been paid, by whom and what it was for.

## Reminder

Playgroup WA membership fees collected from members should be forwarded to Playgroup WA promptly. Playgroups are not covered by insurance until payment is received.

Cash should not be left overnight on playgroup premises. Insurance cover for loss of money may not be provided if money is not held or banked in accordance with insurance policies. Contact Playgroup WA's insurance broker for further information.

- Cash receipts-income book Sample
- Cash receipts-income book Sample 2
- Petty cash book and reconciliation Sample
- Treasurer's report Sample
- Bank reconciliation Sample
- Annual treasurer's report Sample

## 8.3 Expenditure

In small playgroups all the members should be involved in deciding how funds will be spent. In larger playgroup the committee generally approves all expenditure. No matter what the process is it is important to ensure that approval for expenditure has been obtained before spending money or paying bills.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that cash and cheques are kept in a safe place and that effective procedures are agreed to and followed.

The following recommendations may be helpful:

- If using cheques make them payable to a person, business or organisation and cross it "Not Negotiable". This ensures that it will be deposited into the payee's account. Cheques should not be made out to cash except to reimburse petty cash
- Complete all details on the cheque and the cheque butt. Include as much information as you can on the cheque butt
- Before paying a bill, check that the invoice is correct and that the goods have been received in good order. Have a designated playgroup member or committee member verify that by signing the invoice
- If paying by post send the cheque together with a brief note so it is clear what the payment is for
- Write "Cancelled" on any cheques that have been written in error or that are incorrect. Keep those cheques with the cheque book. Contact your bank for advice about how to stop a cheque
- Do not sign cheques in advance

NOTE: Always ensure there are at least two people who must sign or verify electronic payments and transfers.

If the playgroup is run by a volunteer, committee expenses such as telephone and mail costs may be reimbursed. However it is a good idea to agree up front what costs will be covered and any limits that might apply and indicate that receipts should be provided to the Treasurer.

- Cash receipts-expenses book Sample
- Cash receipts-expenses book Sample 2





## 8.4 Petty cash

Small playgroups may find the use of a locked petty cash tin is all they need to safely store playgroup funds and records of expenditure with receipts. Where that is the case ensure the tin is not left at the playgroup venue and designate one member to take it home. Over time it may be useful to scan records and receipts and save them electronically rather than leave them in the petty cash tin.

If scanning records and receipts be sure that they are legible.

In playgroups where there is a bank account and multiple sessions the petty cash is a pre-set amount of money which is used for small items of cash expenditure such as tea, coffee and milk. The playgroup or playgroup committee determine the amount of petty cash that is available. Petty cash needs to be managed like any other financial asset by:

- Issuing a receipt when you receive petty cash to confirm that it has been received
- Obtaining receipts for items purchased wherever possible. These receipts need to be forwarded to the Treasurer together with other relevant information when the petty cash float needs to be reimbursed
- Details of purchases are recorded in the petty cash book and forwarded to the Treasurer when petty cash is being reimbursed

• Petty cash book and reconciliation Sample

## 8.5 Financial records

All playgroups will need to keep some form of records showing income and expenditure. This may simply be a log book of income and expenditure with receipts or require more complex procedures in multisession playgroups. Where there is a designated treasurer they will be responsible for the financial records. Even if the playgroup does not have a treasurer it will need to have someone to keep track of the financial activities of the playgroup.

The type of records you keep will vary depending on the size of the playgroup and the activities undertaken.

The following records and processes are recommended:

- Income and expenses book. This book records every receipt and payment and should be maintained on a regular basis to make balancing and reporting easier
- Financial report; this could simply be a summary at the end of each month in the income and expenditure book which shows all monies can be accounted for and that it balances with your cash in hand or bank account
- Petty cash book. Make sure that the amount shown in the book agrees with the cash in the petty cash tin
- Receipt book
- Fee register showing who has paid and how much

If the playgroup has a bank account it will also be advisable to keep the following:

- Bank statements
- A deposit book to cross reference with bank statements
- Cheque book if applicable
  - Check the bank statements for fees, dishonoured cheques etc. These expenses need to be recorded
  - Check for any credits such as interest and record these details in the income and expenditure book

Note: If the playgroup is incorporated then financial records will need to be kept for a minimum of five years.



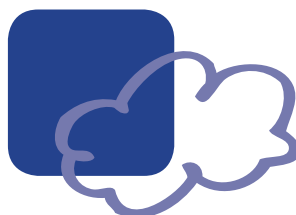
## 8.6 Opening a bank account

Playgroups are advised to check with individual banks and building societies about the type of account that would best meet their needs and specific requirements for opening a bank account. The following points may help you:

- Obtain an authority form from the relevant financial institution. This must be signed by the people authorised by the playgroup or committee to operate the account. You may need to provide supporting documents, such as the minutes of the AGM and constitution or supporting letter from Playgroup WA confirming the playgroup's status as a not for profit group
- The account should be in the name of the playgroup
- Ideally there should be three signatories with two signatures required to conduct online banking, sign cheques and change bank details. These signatories must be nominated by the playgroup or committee and should be people who are readily available
- Those authorised to be signatories will usually be required to pass the "100 point test" and may need to take relevant forms of identification to the bank (driver's licence, passport, birth certificate)
- Always have authority forms available at the AGM or end of year hand over for new signatories to sign
- Fees and charges may apply to the account. Shop around and negotiate for lower charges

### Types of accounts

Playgroup WA advises playgroups to speak to different banks about the best type of account for them.



## 8.7 Fees and budgets

Sometimes it is difficult for playgroups to decide how much to charge in fees and what the payment conditions should be. Drawing up a fee policy as a group can help to provide some guidelines.

**For advice on policy development go to Section 7.6 Policies and procedures.**

Consider the following:

- What annual expenses will the playgroup have?  
E.g. venue hire, maintenance, end of year party, equipment, resources and craft materials
- How much is required to cover these costs?
- Who is responsible for setting the fees?
- What does the fee cover?
- How will fees be paid; weekly, monthly, once a term, or annually?
- When are fees due?
- Do visitors need to pay a fee?
- Will the fee be set per child or per family?
- Is a payment plan possible (flexible arrangements)?
- Will discounts apply for families joining during the term, early payments, families experiencing financial hardship etc?



Playgroups may wish to have confidential arrangements in place for families experiencing difficulties in paying fees. Playgroups may also wish to consider:

- Fundraising events may cause distress to some families, as can excursions requiring payments. Try to organise a variety of events, including no-cost or low-cost outings
- Avoid buying expensive toys if it places a financial obligation on members

### Budgets

A playgroup budget outlines the proposed income and expenditure for the financial year. No matter what size the playgroup, it is highly recommended that a budget be prepared for the coming year and presented for approval to the playgroup or at a committee meeting. Having a budget can help to prepare for the year ahead, plan for expenditure and ensure you have sufficient income to meet the proposed expenditure.

Your budget should include:

- Expenditure
- Rent
- Running costs including materials for activities, electricity, cleaning costs, costs associated with the management and administration of the playgroup
- Excursions and special events
- Purchases of toys and equipment
- Maintenance costs. If you're renting space, be sure to check and agree prior to signing a lease who is responsible for maintenance costs
- Funds to be carried over to the next year for start-up costs
- Income
- Income from fees
- Income from other sources such as grants
- Fundraising targets proposed

Plan your budget to balance income and expenditure with only a minimum amount left to meet start-up costs for the next year.



## 8.8 Taxation

Playgroups that are non-profit and established for community service purposes will generally be exempt from income tax. Contact the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) on 132 866 to check if your playgroup meets the listed criteria.

## 8.9 GST and ABN

Each playgroup must decide for itself whether it will apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN) and/or register for GST. Playgroups should contact the ATO on 132 866 or visit the **ATO website** for further information.

## 8.10 Auditing

There is no requirement that all incorporated bodies in WA have an external audit. Incorporated playgroups should, however, check their own constitutions as audit requirements are often included.

Playgroup WA recommends that playgroups who are incorporated or who are considering becoming incorporated contact the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety for any clarification required.

The **Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** is available for further information and assistance on 1300 30 40 54.

## Audits

An audit is a process of reviewing all of the financial records of the playgroup to ensure that the annual income and expenditure is correctly recorded, that all monies can be accounted for and that appropriate methods are being used to record and manage the playgroup's finances. The auditor will examine all accounting records including invoices, receipts, vouchers, financial statements, bank statements and minutes.

### Auditor

- An auditor is a suitably qualified person, usually a member of a professional accounting organisation or someone with an accounting or auditing qualification
- Should not be a member of the playgroup or related to the Treasurer
- The auditor is appointed at the AGM

### Audit process

- The auditor will require all of the accounting records including receipt books, bank statements, invoices, income and expenditure books and petty cash book
- Allow sufficient time for the audit to take place - it can take several weeks
- The auditor may make recommendations about changes to the playgroup's accounting processes
- When completed, the auditor will prepare a letter stating what he or she has done and verifying that the accounts for the period are correct
- The Treasurer presents the audit report and any recommendations at the AGM
- Remember to allow for the cost of the audit in your annual budget

## 8.11 Your assets

All the playgroup's assets belong to the playgroup. This includes toys, disposable items, cash and money in the bank. Playgroup venue fixtures and fittings such as sun shades and storage sheds generally belong to the venue. In some case the toys and play equipment may also belong to the venue. It is always best to check any hire or lease agreement that the playgroup has with building owners.

Where playgroups are the sole owner of the building assets will also include fixtures and fittings of the building.

## 8.12 Missing funds

Accurate and regular record keeping is essential to ensure the playgroup's funds are safe and well managed. The committee is responsible for ensuring that effective procedures and processes are in place to ensure accountability to the members and to provide protection for those people who handle money.

Playgroups are encouraged to review their policies and procedures relating to handling money and to develop new ones where necessary.

Having clear, written procedures will help avoid misunderstandings and will make the Treasurer's job a lot easier. Honest mistakes do happen but if the Treasurer maintains records and regularly presents information to the committee, such errors should be easy to trace and correct.

If you are running into difficulty with any aspect of your playgroup's financial record keeping, seek help early. Most problems are simple to trace and rectify.

If you suspect that money is missing:

- The Treasurer can ask another member of the committee to go through the books together to help trace the error
- If the problem is more serious it is worth seeking the help of a qualified accountant (a fee may be applicable)

### Involving the police

In some situations playgroups may choose to involve the police. Reporting the loss of money to the police requires the group to make a statement to that effect. You will need to show clear lines of accountability, receipts, bank books, bank statements and any other evidence that may be available.

### Legal advice

It is recommended that playgroups seek legal advice before deciding on a course of action.

### Insurance for missing money

Each situation is different so we strongly suggest that your playgroup refer queries to Playgroup WA's insurance broker for further information.

**Please call Finsura on 1800 252 712 or email [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au) if you need more information.**



## 9 Playgroups as Employers



## 9 Playgroups as Employers

Some playgroups pay someone to do tasks that are usually done voluntarily by parents or caregivers. Playgroup members share costs through increased membership fees or fundraising. This person may clean, set up, pack away, prepare activities or plan and implement a play program.

If a playgroup employs staff the playgroup must meet all legal requirements.

For information about all the different aspects involved in employing and managing staff such as legal obligations, occupational health and safety, wages and conditions, awards and agreements, or contact **WorkSafe** on 1300 307 877.

### 9.1 Payment of award wages

Playgroups are required to pay an employee the relevant current award rate according to whether they are employed on a casual or permanent part time basis. Casual rates are higher per hour because only hours worked are paid and there are no requirements to pay for annual or sick leave.

### 9.2 Income tax

An employee who receives more than the tax income threshold is required to pay income tax. This threshold is set by the Australian Taxation Office. While your playgroup may not be paying the employee a figure over the set threshold, the employee may have more than one job and this has to be taken into consideration.

If this is their only position and they are receiving less than the taxable threshold they must complete a General Taxation Exemption form, which can be obtained from any regional taxation office or by contacting the Australian Tax Office's hotline on 132 865.

Employers must:

- Have employees fill out on commencement a tax declaration form including their tax file number
- Give employees an annual group certificate
- If you have employees earning over the tax threshold you are required to withhold amounts from their pay and send the withheld amounts to the ATO. This process is called 'withholding' and is done using the pay as you go (PAYG) withholding system
- Register with the ATO before you withhold payments to your employees

You can register for PAYG withholding by completing a form (which can be sent to the ATO in paper or electronic form) - phone the ATO on 132 866.

Alternatively, you can register electronically at <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/>



### 9.3 Superannuation

The Commonwealth Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992 requires employers to provide sufficient superannuation support for their employees. Contact the Australian Taxation Office Superannuation Infoline on 131 020 for more information about your playgroup's obligations in this area.

### 9.4 Employee records

The employer is required to keep records of the employees days and hours worked and annual leave and sick leave.

### 9.5 Employment process

- Decide what you want the employee to do
- Draw up a position description
- Decide what qualifications or experience you want in an employee (selection criteria)
- Get a copy of the most relevant award
- Advertise the position
- Interview the best three or four applicants
- Contact referees
- Make a careful choice and contact all applicants advising them of your choice
- Send successful applicant an employment agreement letter
- Arrange an induction for the new employee

### 9.6 Employment agreement letter

- Confirms the appointment
- Welcomes person to the playgroup
- Specifies pay rate
- States commencement date and work hours
- Indicates annual leave and sick leave entitlements
- Establishes a three month probationary period
- Is signed by the president and the employee
- Is kept on file at the playgroup
- An extra copy is given to the employee



## 9.7 WorkSafe

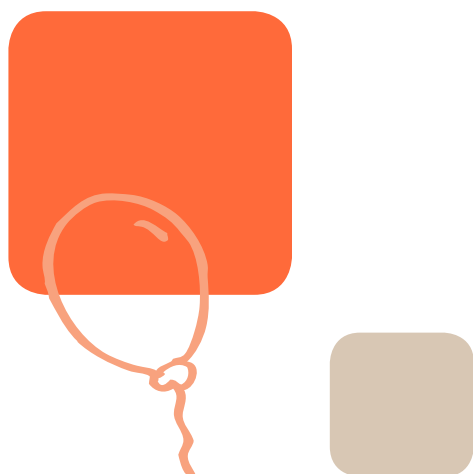
As an employer you must provide a safe and healthy workplace for your staff. For more information call **WorkSafe** on 1300 307 877.

## 9.8 Workers compensation

If your playgroup employs someone such as a play leader or a cleaner you will need to ensure that you have workers compensation cover for those employees. When subcontracting services it is wise to check they have workers compensation in place.

Information about workers compensation can be obtained from Playgroup WA's insurance broker.

**Please call Finsura on 1800 252 712 or email [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au) if you need more information..**



## 10 Fundraising





# 10 Fundraising

Fundraising is a way for playgroups to raise extra money to help the group run better. It should be for a specific project such as purchasing toys or equipment, excursions or special events, to offset the cost of on-going expenses or to help keep fees low.

## 10.1 Things to consider when fundraising

- If the group needs or wants to fundraise
- If increasing fees would be a better and fairer way to get what is needed
- How the playgroup intends to use the money raised
- Who will plan the fundraiser
- How everyone can be involved so the fundraising is not left to a willing few
- Find out how many people are willing to help before you proceed

### Recruit helpers

Accept that everyone is different and contributions of time, money and skills will vary. Make these differences work for your playgroup by encouraging everyone to make a contribution. Avoid burnout of your team. Some groups find one major, well planned annual event works best. Other prefer a series of smaller fundraisers throughout the year. Good communication and reasonable expectations are the keys to success.

### Plan carefully

- Be clear about the outcome you want and amount of money you need to raise
- Consider the ratio of income to hours spent on the event. No one wants to work for many hours then have little to show for it
- Brainstorm possibilities together in a group. Often new ideas gain momentum when they are discussed
- Once the event or activity is decided, draw up a practical plan of action: checklist, jobs, time, costs and goals
- Publicity is important. Local papers reach the local community and give free coverage. Check their deadlines
- Draw up a budget which includes a realistic target, proposed expenditure and break-even figure
- List what is needed and whether these items can be borrowed, donated or hired
- List who will be responsible for collecting and returning items

### After the event

- Bank money
- Make sure all borrowed items are returned
- Thank everyone who has helped
- Work out the dollar amount raised
- Advise members of the results
- File all receipts, mailing lists and checklists for next time – past records greatly assist future efforts
- Document where improvements could be made

## 11 Insurance



# 11 Insurance

Playgroup WA (Inc) employs the brokerage services of Finsura Insurance Broking (Australia) Pty Ltd. This insurance cover IS ONLY APPLICABLE to playgroup-specific activities and does not cover activities for non-playgroup activities such as the use of a playgroup venue for birthday parties.

You can call Finsura on 1800 252 712 or email [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au) if you need more information.

Playgroup WA sends insurance information annually to all playgroups. Be sure to read ALL items, which outline your playgroup's insurance cover and the provider's expectations, carefully and make the information available to all of your playgroup members.

## PDF Forms:

- Insurance Information Form
- Certificate of Currency
- Event Application Form
- Incident Report Form
- Attendance Form



## 11.1 Keeping records/Attendance Sheet

Attendance records are required for insurance purposes. It is important that the playgroup keeps a record of which families actually attend each session. You can use either an attendance sheet, kept in a file, or an attendance book.

Attendance records need to include the following information:

- Date
- Names of all adults and children attending, including babies
- An initial upon arrival\*
- Names of any visitors

Records may be scanned and saved electronically or to a thumbdrive. This will require some process around storing records and handover to new members or committees.

*\*Note: some venues may require arrival and departure times with signature for each entry i.e. schools based playgroups*

## 11.2 Events and non-standard activities

Playgroups need to complete an Event Application Form for any non-standard playgroup event or activity (such as fun days or Christmas parties) with an expected audience of more than 1,000 people.

The form must be completed and forwarded to Finsura Insurance Broking (Australia) Pty Ltd NO LESS THAN 30 days prior to the event.

Please note: An additional insurance premium may be applicable if more than 1000 attendees are expected at the event.

### 11.3 Recording incidents

An incident may include but not be limited to accident causing personal injury or facilities damage, equipment damage, graffiti, vandalism or theft.

It is important for playgroups to fill in an incident report form for any incident that could possibly eventuate in an insurance claim. It is advisable to fill in incident reports while the events are fresh in members' minds so that if a claim should eventuate all the details are available.

Once completed incident reports should be sent to Finsura as soon as practical; this can be done by email. The insurance broker will advise playgroups of any further information that may be required at that time.

For very serious injuries it best to call Finsura immediately and email the incident report and any other relevant information at the same time. Finsura can help to determine if further action should be taken and their advice and direction can assist in resolving serious matters.

Incident reports should include the following details:

- a description of the incident and resulting damage or injury;
- date, time and place;
- people present if applicable;
- action taken; and

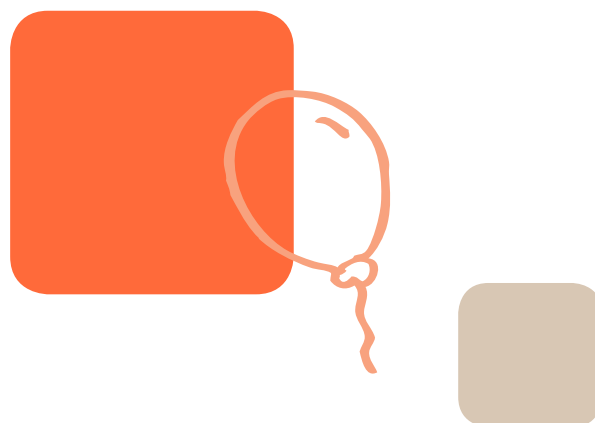
- signature of injured person or carer, any witnesses and person completing the incident report.

To assist playgroups an Incident Report Form template is included in the Manual. It is a good idea for playgroups to keep a record on incidents. Member playgroups are also welcome to forward electronic copies of incident reports to Playgroup WA for electronic storage.

### 11.4 Insurance claims

If an incident becomes an insurance matter, playgroups should contact Finsura directly for the necessary claim forms.

You can call Finsura on 1800 252 712 or email [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au) if you need more information.



## 12 Health and Safety at Playgroup

“There is a collective responsibility of the whole group to ensure everyone can play safely.”



## 12 Health and Safety at Playgroup

A quality playgroup is a safe place that nurtures the health and well-being of adults and children.

- For physical safety provide appropriate equipment, have regular safety checks and offer healthy nutritious food
- To create an encouraging, stress free environment, interactions need to be nurturing, caring, friendly, relaxed, non-threatening, non-judgemental and fun
- A supportive learning environment is stimulating, visually appealing and provides opportunities and challenges to learn and grow through skill development and practice
- Each person's unique participation and contribution is respected, acknowledged and appreciated. Hurting another person with words or actions is unacceptable

Every parent and carer attending playgroup must be responsible for the welfare and safety of their own children but there is also a collective responsibility of the whole group to ensure everyone can play safely.

Playgroups should:

- Make decisions together about safety issues and review them regularly
- Put together a safety policy or guidelines and display them (This can be very simple and consist of signs to remind members to close doors and lock gates etc.)
- Make sure new members are made aware of the safety guidelines and/or policies

Try not to become overly anxious. Playgroups need to keep a balance between being safe and still providing challenging experiences for the children.

Incorporated playgroups will need to be aware of the requirements for incorporated bodies under Occupational, Health and Safety legislation. For further information call **WorkSafe** on 1300 307 877.

For general information on children and safety go to:

**Kidsafe WA**

[www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

Email: [kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au](mailto:kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au)

Telephone: (08) 6244 4880

Country Callers: 1800 802 244

### 12.1 Developing a health and safety policy

Some playgroups, especially smaller groups, may not have formal; written policies around safety. This is ok as long as the group has talked together to identify potential health and safety issues and considered the actions needed to reduce the risk of harm.

If the playgroup is large with multiple sessions Playgroup WA recommends that written health and safety policies would be best. Involve everyone in making decisions about health and safety issues then put them into a safety policy. Display your policy and make new playgroup members aware of it.





Here are some simple steps to take:

1. Develop a statement about the playgroups commitment to safety. Define who will be responsible for safety around:
  - Supervision of children
  - Toys and equipment
  - Children going to the toilet
  - Fences, gates and doors
  - Playground and fixed equipment
  - Car parking and transporting children
  - Other issues related to play activities
2. Display or distribute the playgroup policies and guidelines on:
  - Infectious disease
  - Smoking
  - SunSmart
  - Kitchen issues, cooking and hot drinks etc.
3. Include emergency evacuation procedures in case of fire or trauma
4. Note where the following are kept and who is responsible for them:
  - Emergency numbers for fire, police and ambulance
  - Enrolment forms with personal details should a child or an adult be injured
  - First aid kit
  - Accident and injury book
5. Outline how members may raise concerns and how these will be handled

Remember to regularly read and revise your safety policy.

**(For advice on writing policies and procedures go to Section 7.6 Policies and procedures).**

## 12.2 Identifying potential hazards and risks

Make sure the building and outdoor area where you meet is checked regularly for safety. Ensure outdoor play space and equipment is safe. For example, is there sufficient room for the swing to move and are there soft and well-maintained landing areas under equipment?

If your playgroup is using equipment provided by the owners of the premises it is the committee's responsibility to notify the owner in writing if equipment is unsafe or in need of repair. Don't allow the equipment to be used until it has been repaired or replaced.

## 12.3 Control hazards and potential risks

Remember, even with the best loving care and supervision it is not always possible to keep children free from harm and that mishaps sometimes just happen. Children can still trip, fall, bleed, bruise, get scratched, cut, burnt or bitten. That said it is possible to take positive action to lessen the chances of or stop more serious injuries occurring. This is everybody's responsibility.

Always make it part of the playgroup's regular routine to check all indoor and outdoor play areas for possible hazards. This is particularly necessary when other groups share the playgroup room. If you find a hazard remove, repair, replace or restrict access.





### 12.3.1 Minimise the risks

If hazards cannot be removed then it will be a matter of taking action to minimise risks.

Playgroup WA understands that many playgroups do not own their venue and that sometimes there is little choice in the availability of venues. The ability to make changes to a venue may also be limited. We suggest playgroups negotiate with building owners if there are significant risks associated with the building and outdoor areas. Most owners will be happy to work with the group to improve safety.

The following list offers some suggestions that may help playgroup improve safety at playgroup.

- Where necessary use barriers to protect children. This might include fences, gates, guards, doors, covers, locks, child restraints, containers and cupboards
- Keep dangerous objects out of children's reach by storing up high or in locked cupboards. Try and remove objects that children could use to climb to reach stored items
- Ideally have self-closing and self-locking gates and doors. But if this is not possible ensure doors and gates can be latched closed or locked from the inside and place latches on gates and doors more than 1.5m high
- Have gates and fences made so they cannot be climbed
- Safety film on large windows or sliding doors prevents shattering
- Place safety catches on cupboard doors and cover power points
- When stacking furniture and equipment ensure it is done safely so they cannot fall on anyone
- Make sure tables or chairs can't be used to climb up into dangerous situations
- Rake the sandpit and soft areas before EVERY playgroup session to check for broken glass, discarded syringes, animal droppings and so on

- Keep a fire extinguisher close at hand and check its service date regularly
- If possible put in a smoke detector in the building
- Watch out for redback spiders, especially inside tyres and underneath outdoor furniture. Painting dark areas white will make it easier to check
- Keep the grass short to discourage snakes
- Be especially vigilant in car parks and driveways as young children can be excited when arriving at playgroup and may be keen to get going

### 12.3.2 Be prepared

#### Have phone access

Display your emergency action plan and emergency phone numbers in a prominent position. Regularly check that the information is current.

If a phone is not available at the playgroup venue arrange for a member to carry their mobile phone or make arrangements with nearby residents.

#### Plan emergency transport

Plan ahead how you would transport an adult or child to reach the doctor or emergency rooms at hospitals.

#### Keep numbers manageable

Decide as a group what is a safe number of families to enrol. Take into account the size of the venue, the ages of the children currently attending and the number of families where more than one child attends. Sometimes it is simply the large number of people everywhere that can lead to dangerous situations so if you feel your playgroup is getting too large for safety, look at the possibility of starting a new session.

**For information on starting new sessions go to Section 6.4 Playgroup sessions.**

Ask families to sign in and out in your attendance book so that in an emergency you can quickly see if everyone is accounted for.



### Have a first aid kit

Be sure to have a playgroup first aid kit available. Regularly replace used and out-of-date items. Suitable kits can be purchased from **St John's Ambulance** or **Kidsafe WA**.

Consider having first aid charts displayed and someone in the group with basic first aid training.

### In the case of fire

Know where all fire extinguishers are and be sure everyone knows how to use them. If possible use fire detectors.

Have a simple fire evacuation plan and display the plan and regularly practise the fire drill. Check that emergency exits are clearly labelled and not blocked.

### External fires

If you are in a high bushfire danger area have a policy regarding cancelling the playgroup on high fire danger days.

### Records

Have a book available to record any incidents or injuries while they are fresh in members' minds. If an insurance claim eventuates this information is very important.

When recording an incident include dates, times, place, people present, action taken and signatures. Two adults should complete a signed, eye witness account wherever possible.

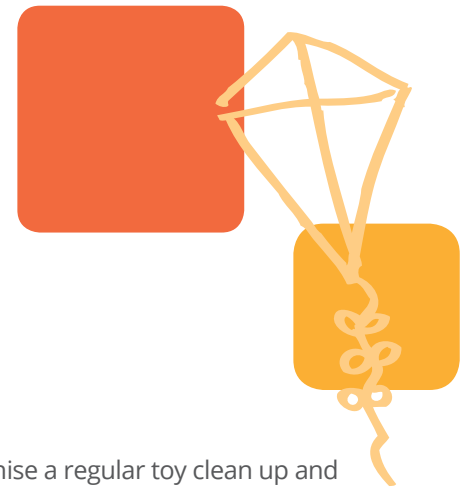
See accident, incident or have a fire evacuation plan and know the location of fire extinguishers.

## 12.4 Setting up safely

A little thought with the setting up of playgroup each week can minimise the possibility of accidents.

As you put out the toys, equipment and activity materials at the beginning of the session you may like to consider the following:

- As soon as play activities have been set up they need to be supervised
- Special care needs to be taken around water and play activities because they can present a serious drowning hazard. Children need close supervision even when water is quite shallow. At the end of the session tip water out of all water troughs, buckets etc. to avoid any risk of amoebic meningitis and other water-borne bacteria
- Ride-on toys are safest away from main traffic areas such as doorways, cupboards and storerooms. They are most suited to outdoors or clearly defined areas
- Baby capsules should never be left on table tops
- Try to encourage everyone to keep small items such as wooden blocks, push along vehicles etc. on play mats or in defined areas. It is easy for young children and adults to trip over small objects
- Don't get out all the toys and equipment at once. Too many items can be a hazard in a confined space and it's better for children to make their selection from fewer choices



## 12.5 Running sessions safely

Safety procedures during your playgroup session are mostly common sense and habit. For example, always have an attendance book for everyone to sign as it's important to know who is at playgroup that day.

Tips for running a safe session:

- The kitchen: Children should not be allowed into the kitchen area at any time. Kitchens can be busy places at playgroup and adults also need to be safe. Scalding is a serious hazard and hot drinks should not be left unattended. As a safety precaution use a cordless kettle or a kettle with a springy telephone-style cord
- Clean up spills: If the floor is wet, let everyone know
- Heaters: If you need to use a heater, check its safety and always use a barrier if it's on the floor
- Broken toys: Immediately remove any toys that have sharp or jagged broken edges, splinters or removable small parts which could be swallowed. (Put them aside for repair or discard and note it in the playgroup inventory list.)
- Plastic bags: Remove plastic bags from play areas and store them by knotting them loosely before placing out of children's reach
- Balloons: Balloons can be a lot of fun but use them with care. Always remove pieces immediately when one bursts and never allow children to play with balloons before they are blown up as they are a choking hazard
- Avoid using "occy" straps to secure equipment
- Launder soft toys, play rugs and mats and dress-ups. Make sure they are completely dry before storing to prevent mould
- Wash in warm, soapy water and disinfect all toys, which can be safely immersed in water. This will be mostly plastic items but check they don't have some metal parts, which are liable to rust
- Some wooden items can also be washed such as blocks and trucks but should not be left to soak for long in case they warp or crack
- Other items should be wiped over including larger equipment, tables and chairs, blackboards, puzzles and board books
- Empty cupboards and shelves completely so all surfaces can be wiped down and coverings such as *Contact* replaced if necessary
- Don't forget the cupboard under the sink, other kitchen cupboards and the medicinal cupboard
- Discuss with the owner of the building about regular carpet cleaning and general maintenance and upkeep of the building

## 12.6 First aid

First aid know-how:

- Find out if any of your members have a First Aid Certificate or have medical qualifications. It is useful to have someone with knowledge or qualifications, but do not rely on them alone
- Everyone can administer basic first aid if the need arises
- Think about undertaking a first aid training course either as an individual or as a playgroup. These are available through **St John's Ambulance** or the **Australian Red Cross** and they can come out to you if a certain number of people are committed to doing the course
- Encourage members to attend low cost seminars on first-aid

It is a good idea for playgroups to have a first aid kit on hand. It should be stored in a dry, cool place, out of children's reach but easy to get hold of if you need it in a hurry.

Keep the kit clearly marked in a strong, rust-proof container with a lid. Make sure everyone knows where it is stored and always return it after use, making a note of items which need replacing. Check bottles and tubes regularly for leakage and expiry dates.

Some playgroups appoint a Safety Officer to be responsible for checking the kit regularly to make sure items used are replaced and use-by dates are watched.

St John Ambulance, the Australian Red Cross and most chemists sell a large range of medical first aid kits. If a playgroup wishes to create their own first aid kit Playgroup WA recommends you contact **St John's Ambulance** or the **Australian Red Cross** for advice on what it should include.

For advice on first aid and first aid kits go to:

### Red Cross

[www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)

Email: [wainfo@redcross.org.au](mailto:wainfo@redcross.org.au)

Telephone: 08 9225 8888

Freecall: 1800 810 710

### St John Ambulance

[www.stjohn.org.au](http://www.stjohn.org.au)

Email: [fast@stjohnambulance.net.au](mailto:fast@stjohnambulance.net.au)

Telephone: 08 9334 1222



## 12.8 Other health issues

There are a range of other health issues that playgroups will need to consider as a group. These may include the development policies and guidelines to ensure the group has a shared understanding and approach.

**For advice on writing policies and procedures go to section 7.6 Policies and procedures.**

Some of the health issues the group may need to consider are listed below.

### 12.8.1 Poisonous plants

Many playgroups have outdoor areas. Growing plants and trees greatly enhances the appearance of these areas and offers shade as well as creating some interesting play opportunities.

However, some plants are toxic and dangerous, even fatal, if eaten or touched.

If your playgroup has a garden please consider the following points:

- Find out what is growing in the play area
- Contact Kidsafe for useful leaflets about poisonous plants. Keep these with emergency information or the first aid kit
- Add the phone number of the Poisons Information Centre 131 126 to your list of emergency numbers
- Some plants cause skin and eye irritation just by being handled or brushed against. These plants should be removed from play areas but contact the building owner first

For more advice go to:

**Poisons Information Centre**

131 126

### Kidsafe WA

[www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

Email: [kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au](mailto:kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au)

Telephone: (08) 6244 4880

Country Callers: 1800 802 244

### 12.8.2 Smoking

Playgroup WA strongly recommends that playgroup is a non-smoking environment because of the danger of passive smoke to small children and the toxicity of cigarette butts.

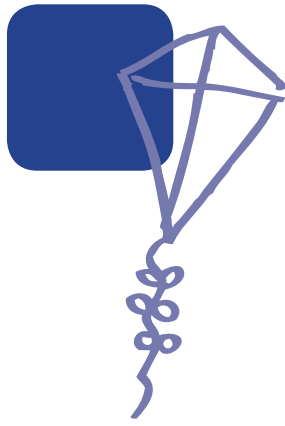
Most community venues including schools, church halls and kindergartens have a no smoking policy that playgroups are required to adopt when using these facilities.

If smoking is permitted at your playgroup, it is important to develop a smoking policy that should include:

- Finding somewhere outside away from children where adults can smoke
- Making sure adequate supervision is still maintained by each parent/carer such as being in view of the children, or asking someone to watch your children while you smoke
- Limiting the number of people absent at any one time
- Ensuring the safe disposal of cigarette butts

Playgroups should be aware of smoking regulations and should check with the **Health Department WA** to ensure they comply. These regulations particularly relate to public places where children have access.

Health Direct is a 24-hour hotline for health information from the Health Department, telephone 1800 022 222.



### 12.8.3 SunSmart

It is important to take precautions when children are playing outdoors. Avoid permanent damage to the children's skin because of over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. You can reduce the risk of skin cancer later in life by discussing together a playgroup SunSmart policy.

Consider the following:

- Encourage children to use shaded areas
- Use sun protection measures whenever the UV Index is 3 or above. UV Alert times available from [www.myUV.com.au](http://www.myUV.com.au)
- Avoid exposure to the sun during peak UV times (when the UV Index is above 8)
- Dress in shirts with collars and long sleeves
- Wear legionnaire style or wider brimmed hats to protect the neck, face and ears. Caps and visors are not recommended
- Adults and children should comply to a *"no hat, play in the shade"* rule
- Use or provide a broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen that is labelled as SPF30 or higher and reapply every two hours to those parts of the body that cannot be covered, including hands and feet
- Adults model SunSmart practices
- Put up posters at playgroup and hand out information to families about being SunSmart
- Make new families aware of the policy
- Provide water for drinking; cordials and sweet drinks do not quench the thirst as well as water, and may attract European wasps
- Contact **Cancer Council WA** for further information or call (08) 9212 4333

## 12.8.4 Sick children

### Infectious diseases and sick children

If children are unwell they should not attend playgroup. Not only will the child be unable to participate happily, it is unfair to other children and adults to be exposed unnecessarily to viral and bacterial infections.

Where a child has an infectious disease such as chicken pox, German measles or whooping cough, the Health Department's Communicable Disease Control section can advise of the minimum exclusion time from school, day care etc and this also applies to playgroup. Don't rely on the opinions of members or anecdotal information, always refer to Health Department guidelines.

Also: It is important to exclude children while they remain infectious and parents/caregivers must consider the well-being of other children at playgroup including those at special risk such as babies too young to be immunised and children with poor immune systems.

Encourage everyone to be considerate about the comfort and wellbeing of all members of playgroup.

For questions regarding specific communicable diseases it is important to contact the Health Department to receive the latest information and current policies.

Health Direct is a 24-hour hotline for health information from the Health Department, telephone 1800 022 222 or visit **Healthy WA** online.

## 12.8.5 Hygiene

Children learn a great deal by copying the behaviour of their parents and caregivers and other children. The best way to teach children about good hygiene is to make sure we practise good habits ourselves.

Most hygiene at playgroup is common sense and follows the same pattern as hygiene at home and everywhere else.

Check that your playgroup has the appropriate facilities, procedures, and equipment for:

- Readily washing hands before eating or handling food, after changing a nappy, or going to the toilet
- Mopping up a variety of kitchen spills, paint and glue spills, etc with different cloths or sponges than used on food preparation surfaces
- Safe disposal of used tissues, soiled cloths and nappies
- Cleaning up of blood, vomit and faeces with disposable gloves and tissues or paper towels
- Cleaning and disinfecting all kitchen, toilet and bathroom areas regularly. Is someone responsible for checking supplies of cleaning materials and replacing as necessary?
- Providing clean tea towels, hand towels, paper towels and sponges
- Adequate washing and storage of crockery, cutlery, plastic bowls
- Sweeping, mopping and vacuuming after every session



### 12.8.6 Blood spills and excretion

All spills of blood and other body fluids are potentially infection hazards so treat them seriously and with care taking the following precautions:

- Equipment: plastic bag, disinfectant, disposable gloves, paper towels, hot water and detergent
- Procedure: saturate paper towel in disinfectant diluted 1/3 cup to 2/3 cup water. Cover spill, leave 10 minutes. Remove into bag. Repeat procedure then wash area with hot water and detergent. Remove gloves into bag and wrap again and dispose of immediately. Wash hands
- Remember gloves are not a total barrier against germs so hands still need to be washed carefully. Germs can also spread from gloves to anything you touch so dispose of them carefully

### 12.8.7 Immunisation and infectious diseases

Playgroup WA supports the benefits of immunisation and the Government of Western Australia Department of Health's position on immunisation. When considering immunisation, we encourage families to seek professional advice from their GP or Child Health Nurse to ensure they make an informed decision regarding the immunisation of their children.

To avoid potential conflicts or misunderstandings playgroups should give some thought to how their group will approach the issue of immunisation and convey that to their members. They should also consider more broadly how to manage infectious diseases at playgroup.

Each playgroup acts as an autonomous group and must

decide what works best for them. Striking a balance between the protection of members and being open to new families at playgroup is ultimately up to the individual playgroup.

It is important to remember that there are a range of reasons why children may not be immunised. If your playgroup is considering a policy around immunisation we encourage you to involve all playgroup members and to contact us.

Playgroup WA recognises that there are times throughout the year that are more prevalent to colds and viruses. To reflect this position, we recommend playgroups

- Have policies requiring families to abstain from attending playgroup if their child is unwell;
- Advise members to contact their GP or the Health Department when a child has an infectious disease such as a chicken pox, German measles or whooping cough. They can advise of the minimum exclusion time from playgroup, child care, school etc.;
- Remind members that it is important to exclude children while they remain infectious to ensure the wellbeing of others at playgroup, especially those in high risk categories such as babies too young to be immunised, children with poor immune systems and pregnant women; and
- Ask members to clean toys that have been salivated on (cough, sucked etc) to limit the spread of disease.

Click this [link](#) to the Health Department for periods for communicable diseases.



## 12.9 Health and Safety Check

It is important that all members of playgroup are happy with the health and safety aspects of their playgroup. As a guide to assessing the health and safety standards of your playgroup, it's a good idea to have regular checks on safety at playgroup. This can be done in different ways:

- Have a group meeting to discuss any issues or improvements
- Larger playgroups may like to ask members to complete a survey or designate a working group to carry out an 'audit' and use the results to make improvements and address any new health and safety issues (see example questions overleaf)

Things to ask when conducting a health and safety check:

- Are the emergency numbers for all playgroup members listed in the playgroup attendance book?
- Is there a record for all playgroup members' allergies, including food allergies, listed in the playgroup attendance book?
- Is the first aid kit accessible and out of reach of children?
- Do all playgroup members know where the first aid kit is kept?
- Are all poisonous substances out of reach of children?
- Does the playgroup have a policy for attendance of members with contagious and infectious diseases?
- Are all adults' bags and belongings stored out of reach of children during a playgroup session?
- Are all storage areas at playgroup inaccessible to children during sessions?
- Do all cupboard doors have safety latches?
- Are all playgroup toys and equipment checked regularly for cleanliness or damage?
- Does installed outdoor equipment meet all Australian Safety Standards?
- Are members satisfied with the child safety aspects of access to kitchen, toilets, external doors and doorways to stairs and playgroup?
- Do playgroup members take sun protective measures at playgroup?
- Are all craft materials at playgroup non-toxic?
- Has the playgroup developed a procedure for leaving the venue in case of a fire?
- Can all members easily locate and use the fire extinguisher?
- Does the venue have a working smoke detector?
- Are the urns, kettles and cords from electrical equipment inaccessible to children at playgroup and all accessible power points covered?
- Are hot beverages consumed according to the playgroup's 'hot drink' policy?
- Is the playgroup venue and equipment checked regularly for insects, spiders and snakes both inside and out?
- Do all self-closing gates work properly?
- Is access to the parking area restricted during the playgroup session?
- Are all dangerous areas of the building such as grates and drainage pipes inaccessible to children during the playgroup session?
- Do large windows and sliding doors have safety film?
- Are effective hygiene methods used at playgroup e.g. washing of hands and toileting?
- Is all playgroup equipment cleaned and

## 13 Child Protection



## 13 Child Protection



Playgroup WA recognises that the care and protection of children requires a “whole of community” approach. When their safety is at risk, children rely on responsible adults to act protectively on their behalf. They cannot protect themselves.

If you have a concern about the safety of a child, contact the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. Go to their website for information on making a report:

[www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au)

If employing staff or subcontractors playgroups are advised to ask to see a copy of their Working With Children Check (WWCC) contact the Working with Children Screening Unit on:

Telephone: 08 6217 8100

Freecall: 1800 883 979.

For more information on WWCC go to

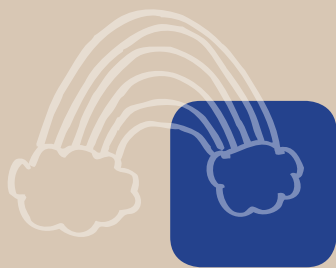
[www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au](http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au)

Playgroup WA will notify the Department for Child Protection and Family Support if it is concerned that a child has been harmed or at risk of harm.



## 14 Venues and Leases

“It is important to build positive relationships with the owners of your venue. Recognise the rights of building owners and the constraints they may have on their budgets.”



## 14 Venues and Leases

All playgroups need a venue. It might be a park, someone's home, a church hall, community centre or sports club. For many playgroups finding a suitable and affordable venue can be one of the biggest challenges they face. In smaller communities or rapidly growing communities there can be limited choices in venues and the playgroup is just happy to have somewhere to go.

With that said, if playgroups were able to give a wish list it would look something like this:

- Inside and outside facilities
- A safe environment both inside and outside
- A light and airy space
- Toilets inside the facility with a change room/area for babies. Toilets need to cater for children as well as adults
- Kitchen facilities that can be blocked off from the play area and accessible from all play areas/rooms
- Secure storage space for toys and equipment (e.g. small chairs and tables, bikes, gym equipment etc)
- Fencing around outdoor areas
- Sand pits/digging areas should have covers
- Shaded outside areas
- Play equipment outdoors (play areas would ideally be designed to optimise opportunities for natural play, discovery, and quiet play)
- Adequate parking facilities with pedestrian access for parents/caregivers with young children and strollers
- Space for strollers outside the play space

It is important to build positive relationships with the owners of your venue. Recognise the rights of building owners and the constraints they may have on their budgets.

Working cooperatively, rather than making demands, is more likely to lead to changes to a playgroup's advantage. Private owners will welcome their facilities being used effectively and for the good of the community but they are not obliged to make improvements or lower the rent. These are issues that can be worked through when good relationships are established.

This section provides some strategies to help playgroups manage their relationships with venue owners.





## 14.1 Dealing with building owners

No matter what size the playgroup is or whether it has a committee or just an informal working group you need to establish a good working relationship with the venue owners. There are bound to be issues from time to time that make it necessary for a playgroup to negotiate with the building's owners. If you have already met with the owners or at least spoken to their representative on the phone it will make it much easier to deal with them when a problem arises. The following ideas may help:

- Find out who is the most appropriate person to speak to and make a point of contacting them first whenever possible
- Invite a representative from the owner to attend a playgroup session so they can discover first hand what a playgroup is all about. It gives you an opportunity to show what a valuable community resource you are
- If you have a complaint, make sure you write down as many points as you can about the issue so that you can present your concern or complaint clearly
- You are more likely to achieve success if you approach the owner in a friendly and positive way
- Make sure the owner is fully aware of your special safety requirements. If adults generally use the building, the owner may not realise aspects are unsafe for young children
- Be aware that the owner has rights too. Your playgroup needs to make sure it plays its part in caring for the building
- Report damage immediately, whether you caused it or not. The owner needs to be fully aware of the state of the building

## 14.2 Lobbying your local council

Situations may arise when you want to lobby your council on a certain issue, such as upgrading a building or playground or as a response to a steep increase in rent. You may be applying for a council grant or assistance with a building project. Playgroup families may be ratepayers and elect the council members. They are entitled to have a say about the provision and use of council facilities.

When lobbying over issues or applying for grants, the strong arguments in favour of playgroups are they:

- Bring local families together. To build social support within communities
- Have a strong community development approach, in that they help families work together to meet the needs of families and children
- Provide play opportunities for children and social interaction for parents and caregivers
- Are low cost and effective community support
- Assist families to develop organisational skills and expertise in running community groups, and provide social and emotional support for families

You will need to contact your local council to:

- Hold a fun day in one of its parks
- Fundraise (such as a cake stall) on a pathway or other council property





## 14.3 Lease agreements

Only incorporated groups may enter into contracts including lease agreements. These groups may be invited to participate in drawing up a lease, may be offered one that is standard for the owner of that building, or may inherit a lease drawn up some time ago.

### 14.3.1 Liability

Contact Playgroup WA's public liability insurance broker to check the wording of your current lease or before signing new hire or lease agreements.

**Please call Finsura on 1800 252 712 or email [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au) if you need more information.**

The President and committee need to be familiar with the lease agreement. You should:

- Obtain a copy and read it carefully
- Make a time at a meeting to go over the major points and list any items of concern or clauses you don't understand
- Find out who you should speak to if you need to discuss the lease agreement
- If the lease was drawn up some time ago, contact the owner and arrange a meeting where you can discuss possible changes and improvements

If your playgroup has a lease or hire agreement for the use of the venue, make sure that you have a copy readily available. In the event of an insurance claim being made it is really important that you have access to these documents in order for the claim to be processed.

How ever long the lease/hire agreement has been in place, it is important to review it regularly. Sometimes clauses are included in the initial agreement which turn out to be unworkable and it's also easy to overlook things when you first start. The group's circumstances may have changed significantly, for example the size of the group and the number of sessions you operate may have changed.

Remember: Playgroup WA is happy to look at draft lease agreements for playgroups.

“As with all problems, prevention is better than cure.”

## 15 Dealing with Conflict



# 15 Dealing with Conflict

All playgroups are made up of people and no matter how well run, or how hard everyone works at making playgroup a success there will inevitably be times when there is some conflict. This section describes some common conflicts that can occur at playgroup and sets out some guiding principles about managing conflict and strategies that have worked. It is worth remembering that from our experiences at work, at home and in other groups we all know that what happens during a conflict is often more significant than the things that may have triggered something. We humans have an unfortunate tendency to say and do things when we are upset that we wouldn't even consider when we are calm. This section is designed to help sail through the storms that will find most of us from time to time.

## 15.1 Principles of Conflict Management

### 1. Have a plan

Whether your playgroup is a small single session or a large incorporated group with multiple sessions having a clear understanding of how conflict will be managed is an important step in successfully managing conflict when it does arise. Individuals respond to conflict in different ways and according to different circumstances. Having an agreed plan will go a long way to limiting the impact of conflicts that may arise as many conflicts are made worse when people question the process. Having a clear plan will substantially reduce the amount of time and angst involved. It will also save those managing the conflict from having to develop a process once difficulties have already arisen. Different playgroups will need different levels of planning and policy. The small single session group can have an open group conversation about how they would like to deal with issues if they come up, while we encourage the larger committee run groups to have written policies where possible. Written policies are particularly useful as a way of communicating where groups are too large to have open conversation amongst members.

### 2. Clear Communication

Clear communication is critical in both preventing conflict and managing conflicts that do arise. Many conflicts can be prevented by ensuring that people are clear about playgroup expectations. People are going to have a variety of views about many things including: parenting styles, supervision of children, activities, venues, managing money and helping out just to name a few. These differences are inevitable and if people are not clear about any expectations in a playgroup, conflict can quickly arise. Whatever expectations your playgroup may have, members and particularly new members need to know them. Better still members should be encouraged to discuss expectations so that viewpoints are shared and understood. There are obvious times when this communication should occur: when new members join, at the start of a new year, when policies change and when new playgroups commence. The level of detail will grow with the size and complexity of the playgroup but the basic principle is that people have a right to know what is expected.

### 3. Being Objective

It might be stating the obvious but sticking to the facts and staying away from personal opinion and likes/dislikes are fundamental principles of managing and minimising conflict. The first step is to establish agreed facts about what has or hasn't happened. Explanations and judgements may or may not come later but a conversation about a parent not supervising a child adequately will quickly escalate if a comment about poor parenting is made. Sticking to the facts will also help avoid confusion about who saw what. Committee members can be left with the difficult task of confronting someone about something that they haven't actually seen or heard. In this situation it is important to acknowledge whether you are talking about something reported to you or something you actually know. If it's a matter that has been reported to you having an open mind is essential.



#### 4. Consistency

Nothing will cause greater and longer conflict than someone believing they are being singled out or unfairly treated. Having a shared understanding about how the playgroup operates and expectations of members will go a long way to minimising the chances of people feeling poorly treated. It is just as important to demonstrate that these expectations are consistently applied. Payment of fees is a good example where inconsistency causes issues. Having some people paying fees and some not, just leads to resentment and poor relationships. We encourage playgroups to develop their own way of approaching fees and making allowances for hardship is recommended where possible. However, whilst having a clear well communicated policy will help prevent many of these problems it still needs to be backed up with consistent action. If someone hasn't paid fees by a due date and hasn't offered a satisfactory explanation then waiting and saying nothing will not help. People should be politely reminded at the earliest opportunity when everyone is calm. Waiting will inevitably result in a more difficult conversation and increase the chances of conflict when the issue is finally raised. Similarly expectations around supervision of children are best clarified. If people are expected to organise morning tea than is it expected that someone else will keep an eye on their children? Talking about these things will help develop a clear picture of what is supposed to happen and will minimise people feel like they are being unfairly targeted if something does go wrong.

#### 5. Confidentiality

Remember that everyone at playgroup has to respect a person's right to confidentiality. Personal information should not be shared without permission whether it comes from a complaint or an accusation. If something is to be discussed within a group or committee meeting then it is important to clarify how much individuals are happy to be shared. People also have the right to have issues raised with them individually rather than put into potentially embarrassing group situations. This is especially important when dealing with sensitive subjects like parenting and finances.

#### 6. The Right to Feel Safe

All children and adults participating in playgroup have the right to feel physically and emotionally safe. This includes safety from negative comments, innuendo and subjective comments about participants. Comments about other playgroup participants have the potential to cause distress regardless of people's intentions. Children have a specific right to feel safe and to be adequately supervised by their parent or caregiver. Parents are responsible for supervising their children.

### 15.2 Typical areas of conflict

After 45 years of working with and supporting playgroups, we have found the most common areas of conflict that can occur within a playgroup are:

- Disagreement between individual members
- Dissatisfaction with the management of the group
- A feeling of unfairness felt by different sessions
- Reluctance of some members to participate and contribute fully
- Disagreement over the management of children's behaviour
- Difficulty agreeing about fundraising or purchasing equipment
- Personality clashes
- Differences of opinion about playgroup activities
- Non-payment of fees

As with all problems, prevention is better than cure. There are a number of sections in this manual that can help your playgroup maintain open communication and decision-making so that conflict is kept to a minimum.

Try re-reading some of the following sections as they can provide a guide for playgroups in their approach to communication which is the key to conflict prevention.

- 6 Organising your playgroup
- 5.2 Making everyone feel welcome
- 7.2.7 Effective committee meetings

## 15.3 Who does what?

How a playgroup reacts to complaints will largely determine the morale of the group. All members have the right to have opinions and make comments about their playgroup. If the complaint is about safety, it needs to be dealt with immediately.

Playgroups that actively encourage everyone to share their concerns are creating an environment of open communication that is essential for any group to function well and creates potential for change that will make playgroup better for everyone. Take the opportunity to turn the negativity of complaints into a chance for growth. Everyone needs to be involved in the process so that if they hear of, or have a complaint, they are confident their views will be heard and the appropriate action taken.

There are three simple steps for handling complaints:

- Listen
- Identify
- Action

### Listen

Talk with the person making the complaint e.g. "I've heard you're concerned about." Let them talk and try to understand how they feel.

- Concentrate on getting the facts right
- Listen without interrupting and repeat back what you think they are saying
- Let them know you take their concerns seriously
- Ask if they have a solution that could be considered by the group
- Thank them for raising the issue and tell them you need time to consider it and that you will get back to them. Be sure you do.

### Identify

Identify if the complaint is:

- Personal
- Relating to a playgroup session
- Relating to the whole playgroup

If it is person to person, encourage both to work it out. If relating to the session, it can be handled by group discussion. If relating to all sessions or if it impacts on the management or reputation of the playgroup, it needs to be raised at your next committee meeting.

Coordinator's check list before acting:

- Am I clear on the main issue?
- Am I being objective?
- Where do I raise the issue?
- Do I need advice from someone whose opinion I respect (remember to maintain confidentiality)?

### Action

Once you have decided how to proceed, thank the complainant for raising the issue and tell them how you plan to handle their complaint. Refer the issue to the Management Committee if appropriate. If the issue relates only to the session make sure that outcomes or decisions reached by the group are circulated for all session members.



## 16 Managing Challenging Behaviour at Playgroup

“All children go through developmental stages that Challenge their parents and Caregivers.”





## 16 Managing Challenging Behaviour at Playgroup

All children go through developmental stages that challenge their parents and caregivers. Biting, pushing, arguing, tantrums and problems with sharing are common behaviours that many children will struggle with at various times. It is important to remember that there is no definitive time when things like these will start or stop and that each child is different. People with more than one child will know how different children can often be even with the same parenting.

While these behaviours are quite normal in young children, sometimes children's behaviour can seem particularly disruptive and the whole playgroup is affected. Such situations are perhaps the biggest challenge that playgroups can face, particularly when there is disagreement about how behaviour is being managed. Whilst parenting style may be a factor, there are also many other things that can impact on children's behaviour. It is also worth remembering that all parents have good days and bad days. Knowing all of this, making assumptions and judgements about children and parents is an exercise fraught with risk.

The most sobering thought about a child who displays challenging behaviour is that it could be any child. If it isn't your child at the moment that is causing a few headaches at playgroup, it could be yours next month or next year. Having this kind of attitude makes it easier to feel empathy for the parents and caregivers of children displaying such behaviour rather than disapprove of their parenting.

Playgroups provide places where families can enjoy the company of others knowing their experiences are understood and shared.

It is important to remember that the child is not the problem. What the child does is the problem. Maybe what the child is doing at that moment in time is the problem in as far as it can be disrupting to playgroup and unsettling to others.

### 16.1 What is challenging behaviour?

As parents and caregivers we don't always agree what constitutes challenging behaviour. Most people would agree that hitting, biting or snatching toys are examples of behaviour that needs modifying though we may not agree on how to deal with such behaviour.

On the other hand, some children tease, some are "bossy" and like to dominate play while others cry readily if something does not go their way, leaving adults uncertain about what happened and who was responsible for the tears. While recognising that these behaviours and responses are all quite normal in young children, they can challenge the smooth running of the playgroup.

Parents and caregivers also view behaviour differently depending on whether their child is displaying the behaviour or is on the receiving end. All together it is an area that requires a degree of sensitivity by the playgroup.







## 16.2 Understanding the behaviour

Children can display challenging behaviours for a variety of reasons. They often try out new behaviours and the response they get from parents, other adults and siblings set patterns for their future behaviour. When young children feel hurt, frustrated, threatened or confused they are often ill-equipped to deal effectively with their emotions.

Their behaviour may be a response to these emotions.

Other things outside playgroup that can influence children's behaviour include:

- Language skills - the child may not be able to express their emotions verbally
  - Tiredness
  - Feeling unwell or having an illness
  - Physical problems such as poor hearing or allergies resulting in frustration or changes in the child's behaviour
  - Changes in the family unit or at home e.g. birth of a new baby, financial pressure, moving house, separation from loved family members
  - Social isolation
  - Experienced trauma
- There may also be things happening at playgroup that are having an impact on children's behaviour such as:
- Too much or too little stimulation. There is a balance to be found when setting up a great playgroup environment. Too much going on with toys, equipment and decorations can be overwhelming and make it difficult for children to make choices and focus on one activity. On the other hand, too little resources and things of interest can lead to a lack of stimulation and leave children feeling bored and frustrated. Getting the balance right is important and will need reviewing as children develop and their interests change. It is also important to have age appropriate activities. In groups where there is a range of ages activities need to meet the different stages of development. Remember giving children choices is important but more is not necessarily better. Try rotating toys and equipment each week
  - Changes in the playgroup environment or routine. In the same way that children need help to understand changes at home they also need help with social and environmental changes that happen at playgroup. Children may experience feelings of loss or confusion with the coming and going of playgroup members; the removal of favourite old toys; or the introduction of new toys and equipment; and changes to the playgroup routine. The support of the adults around them can help them make sense of change and to manage their feelings. Talking to children about even small changes and differences at playgroup can help everybody to adjust

- Lack of space or too many children in the available space. Each playgroup will have differences in the type and amount of space available for play. Having too many families in a crowded, noisy space may be quite overwhelming for young children and may lead to difficulties in managing their behaviour. Similarly, too much space can also present challenges for young children in knowing how to use the space effectively. How many families you have in your playgroup session will depend on the size of the playroom and the playground space as well as other factors such as how old the children are. Each group will need to work out what will work best to meet the needs of the families. If a playgroup is growing it may need to consider adding more sessions
- Group dynamics. Being part of a group, whether for work or play, requires social skills and takes time to master. It is important to acknowledge, that learning how a group works and what each person is like and how to fit in can be a challenge for children just as much as it is for adults. One of the benefits of playgroup is that it gives children an opportunity to practise these social skills but it can be unsettling at times as well. It can be confusing for children as they come to understand the order of things and that they need to negotiate with others, take turns and share. Tears, frustration, anger and even hurt are bound to occur from time to time. Children need the support of everybody to assist them as they grow in understanding

- Supervision and adult/child interaction. Supervision is more than just checking on children's physical safety; it is also about ensuring that children are feeling emotionally safe and supported. Children need to feel confident that their needs will be met and that they have their parent/caregiver's attention and support as much when they are out and about exploring as when they are sitting on their laps. They are hard-wired to seek out protection and reassurance from a parent or caregiver and watch to see if their parent/caregiver is paying attention to them. If parents are not available to them - i.e. are not supervising or have not asked someone to help with this if they can't be there - children may react to their fears or uncertainty and this will impact on their behaviour. When children feel unsafe or disorganised they need to know that they can call on their parent or caregiver for support

Children also need their parent/caregiver to be with them, to share in what they are doing, to enjoy the experience with them, to delight in who they are and what they are doing. Being with your child provides him/her with positive feedback that they can rely on you to help and support them and helps them to build comfort and a sense of self-worth. As they share these experiences with their parent, children also build self-esteem and confidence in what they can do.

When a child feels unsafe in an environment (either physically unsafe or emotionally unsafe) or needs help to organise their feelings and make sense of what has happened, they need their parent/caregiver to take charge and to help them to manage the situation.

- Diet. Children's minds and bodies are affected by the food they eat. Diet adversely affects some children's behaviour, sometimes dramatically. And it's not just junk food! Foods heavily processed with artificial colours and flavourings, preservatives and additives. Missing breakfast and other meals can also lead to disruptive behaviours while at playgroup. These things need to be considered when scheduling morning tea time as well as the type and variety of foods being offered to children

## 16.3 Promoting positive behaviour

One of the most important things to do when dealing with challenging behaviour is to STAY CALM! This can also be one of the most difficult things to do, however if you can acknowledge your own feelings, step back and take an extra breath before responding, it can buy you some time to think about what you say and why you might want to say it.

Another way you can help is by looking for ways to promote positive behaviour in children such as:

- Notice and encourage desirable behaviour
- Model positive behaviour and language
- Teach children to use other ways to express themselves
- Have realistic expectations about what the children are able to do
- Set up activities, toys and equipment that are appropriate to the children's age and stage of development
- Set clear, firm and consistent limits
- Identify and be aware of triggers - look at what might be behind the behaviour and adjust the environment accordingly
- Look at the physical environment - is it contributing to the problem?
- Offer choices - this will help their self-esteem and their confidence
- Listen to children. Respect their need for privacy and do not discuss with other children or playgroup members
- Redirect children - divert their attention or direct them to activities that will provide outlets for energy such as physical play, running outside, blowing bubbles
- Provide sensory activities such as painting, water and sand play

### 16.3.1 Parents and caregivers

Some things that might be helpful to remember:

- Be responsible for your child - support, encourage and supervise your child
- Ignoring your children's behaviour will not make it go away
- Identify and act on the important issues such as children's safety and well-being
- Help your child to express himself or herself without endangering others but remember he or she may need lots of opportunities to practise
- Respond to your child's needs - e.g. if he or she can't manage for the whole two hours try staying for a shorter time
- Communicate with your friends at playgroup. Let them know how you are feeling, what you are trying to do and how they can help
- Coming to playgroup can help your child to learn and practise skills and behaviours



### 16.3.2 Playgroup and playgroup members

Be creative and positive in your problem solving and most importantly avoid humiliating children or labelling them as “problems”. Try and target the behaviour not the child. Remember that no one is perfect. Everyone, including young children, makes mistakes and we can all learn from them.

The playgroup and the members can help by:

- Making the child and their parent or caregiver feel welcome, accepted and valued
- Talking to the parent or carer to see how you can help
- Discussing ways to model and encourage the desired behaviour
- Making adjustments to the physical environment if required
- Having a policy or plan for dealing with challenging behaviours

For further advice on parenting, child development and behaviour go to:

#### Ngala

[www.ngala.com.au](http://www.ngala.com.au)

[www.facebook.com/NgalaParenting?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/NgalaParenting?fref=ts)

Ngala Helpline: 9368 9368

Country Access: 1800 111 546

#### Raising Children Network

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

[www.facebook.com/RaisingChildrenNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/RaisingChildrenNetwork)

## 17 Appendices



## CERTIFICATE OF CURRENCY

CERTIFICATE NO. 38813	
This certificate confirms that the under mentioned policy is effective in accordance with the details shown.	
<b>Name of Insured:</b>	<b>PLAYGROUP WA INC</b>
<b>Cover:</b>	Public Liability: \$20,000,000 any one occurrence Products Liability: \$20,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate (For the Business of Playgroup Association only)
<b>Activity/Business:</b>	Playgroup Association
<b>Excess:</b>	As per policy schedule
<b>Period of Insurance:</b>	31/10/2016 to 31/10/2017
<b>Underwriter:</b>	Certain Underwriters at Lloyd's
<b>Policy Number:</b>	PMEL99/0098999
<b>Counterparties:</b>	None
<b>For full terms, conditions and exclusions please refer to Your Policy Wording version Active_Liability_Policy_Wording_2305.13.</b>	



3/11/2016

DATE

Playgroup WA member playgroups will receive a copy of the Certificate of Currency direct from our office. If you require another copy please email: [membership@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:membership@playgroupwa.com.au)

## **2016/2017 INSURANCE INFORMATION**

Playgroup WA Inc. have renewed the following insurances up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 through our insurance brokers, Finsura Insurance Broking (Australia) Pty Ltd. These covers have been placed with the following Australian licensed insurers:-

- Industrial Special Risks - Sportscover/Active Underwriting (Lloyd's)
- Broadform Liability - Sportscover/Active Underwriting (Lloyd's)
- Personal Accident - Sportscover/Active Underwriting (Lloyd's)

The advice and information given in this brochure is general in nature and is subject to change. Specific insurance information and/or advice should be sought from our insurance brokers, Finsura Insurance Broking (Australia) Pty Ltd.

### **General Insurance and Claims Enquiries**

Contact: Geoff Doyle – Corporate Account Manager

Phone 02 9899 2999

Email: [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au)

Website: [www.finsura.com.au](http://www.finsura.com.au)



## Summary of Policies

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF MAIN POLICIES CURRENTLY HELD BY **PLAYGROUP WA** COVERING AFFILIATED PLAYGROUPS AND PLAYGROUP ACTIVITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS SUMMARY IS NOT THE POLICY WORDING AND ANY CLARIFICATION REQUIRED SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OFFICIAL POLICY WORDINGS WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST. FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT FINSURA

### 1. INDUSTRIAL SPECIAL RISKS

a) **Fire & Perils** – this policy covers amongst other things, loss or damage to Playgroup equipment by fire, explosion, earthquake, lightning, storm & tempest, impact by vehicles & malicious damage. Please refer to Finsura/Playgroup WA admin office for your level of cover. No Flood extension under policy. An excess will apply.

b) **Burglary** – this policy covers loss or damage to Playgroup equipment (including outdoor equipment) as a result of forcible and violent entry to locked premises which is secured and where there is evidence of removal following a loss. Please refer to Finsura/Playgroup WA admin office for your level of cover. An excess will apply.

c) **Money** – this policy covers Playgroup's cash or negotiable instruments up to an amount of \$5,000 whilst in transit to and from Playgroup, on premises during business hours, whilst in personal custody or whilst in a locked safe. An excess will apply.

**NB: MONEY MUST BE BANKED NEXT BUSINESS DAY.  
DO NOT LEAVE CASH IN ANY VEHICLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.  
CASH MUST BE SAFEGUARDED AT ALL TIMES.**

d) **Glass** – this policy covers all internal & external fixed glass. The Sum Insured is the replacement value of the broken glass. An excess will apply.

**Note:** Bayswater, Esperence, Parkwood, Subiaco, Shenton Park, Montessori, La Casa Dei Bambini, Gwelup, Yarloop, Attadale, Hedland, Highgate, Willetton & Claremont have different levels of Fire & Perils & Burglary Cover. Please contact Finsura/ Playgroup WA admin office if you need to vary your cover or assistance.

## 2. VOLUNTARY WORKERS PERSONAL ACCIDENT

### a) Voluntary Workers

This policy covers voluntary workers including carers aged 18-90 who are Financial Members of the Association including teenage mum & dad below 18years old; and replacement carers aged 18-90 who are parents, grandparents or family members of a Financial Member, whilst carrying out duties associated with Playgroup and authorised by a Playgroup Committee Member.

#### **Benefits:**

- Benefits (Including Ambulance) up to 100% subject max \$2,000, any one accident, for expenses incurred as a result of that accident (including non medical expenses). Excess is \$20 each & every claim. Refer to policy schedule for more details.
- Compensation for income earners – 85% of income, up to \$500 per week Benefit period up to 104 weeks, with a deferment period of 7days.
- Compensation for non-income earners requiring domestic help – 85% of assistance, up to \$500 per week, with a deferment period of 7days.
- Accidental Death and Permanent Disablement up to \$100,000

### **Children –**

This policy provides cover to dependant children (aged 0 – 18 years) of a Financial Member of the Association

Benefits (including Ambulance) up to 90% subject max \$2,000 any one accident incurred as a result of that accident including non medicare medical expenses subject to an excess of \$20 each & every claim. Accidental death and Permanent Disablement up to \$20,000each; and an additional \$5,000 toward funeral expenses subject to a schedule of injuries detailed in the policy wording.

### **Applies to both Voluntary workers and Children Combined**

#### **Aggregate Limit of Liability**

- (a) any one accident or occurrence \$1,000,000
- (b) Non Scheduled air travel Not Insured

#### **Does Not Cover:**

Costs under Medicare and benefits payable under Private Health Funds.

#### **Medicare Gap**

It is not possible to claim for the gap **BETWEEN** Medicare rebate and medical practitioner's fee. 4

### 3. PUBLIC LIABILITY / FUN DAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS

This policy will cover the legal liability of Playgroup WA, its affiliated playgroups and their members (including children) in respect of personal injury and/or property damage to third party caused by an occurrence in connection with Playgroup activities within Australia. Limit of Liability is \$20,000,000 any one occurrence including member to member.

#### ***Fun Days & Special Events***

Changes to public liability insurance over recent years have increased insurers' concerns about their liability and risk involved with events such as fun days and Christmas parties. We consider these events as standard playgroup activities. However, you will need to notify Finsura and complete specific forms if you anticipate the event attracting more than 1,000 attendees.

The forms to be completed for Events or Excursion attracting more than 1,000 attendees:-

Event Questionnaire and a Risks Assessment form, which are available from Playgroup WA Inc. or Finsura. The forms MUST be completed and forwarded to Finsura Insurance Broking (Aust) Pty Ltd no less than 30 days prior to the event.

Note: An additional insurance premium may also be applicable if there are over 1,000 attendees.

email : [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au)

#### ***Leases & Contractual liability***

Prior to signing, please ensure that all Leases are forwarded to Playgroup WA or Finsura for approval by insurers.

The standard PL policy does not cover liability assumed under contract (including lease agreement). If there is any terms in the lease agreement which provides 'hold harmless' or release the Landlord from liability, such terms must be reviewed and subject to insurers' approval. Otherwise, there may be no cover in event of a claim arising and affiliated playgroup may be personally held liable for any claims arising therefrom. Therefore, it is prudent to forward all leases be forwarded to Finsura, regardless of whether lease is signed or not.

#### ***Excluded Activities/Subleasing***

A Playgroup will need to obtain its own insurance separately for any of the following situations:

Whenever a group is doing non Playgroup authorised events.

Whenever the activities are non standard Playgroup events declined for coverage by the insurer.

Whenever sub leasing for parties, families, parties or other.

Finsura have an arrangement to assist in these circumstances. Please contact them for further information on how to arrange a separate cover.

#### ***Fixed Playgroup Equipment***

Affiliated Playgroups are advised not to erect, maintain or repair playground equipment as this should be the responsibility of the owner of the venue. Under no circumstances should new equipment be installed. If Playgroups have, in the past, erected equipment and are now maintaining and repairing this equipment, it is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that only qualified and insured tradespeople, who have specialist experience in the area, are engaged for this work. There are Australian Standards that apply to such equipment and it is important that the equipment remain compliant.



## Important Information and Special Notes

### SPECIAL EVENTS, FUN DAYS & EXCURSIONS

Most events run by affiliated Playgroups and which are endorsed by Playgroup WA are covered. However, you are required to fill out an Excursion or Event Questionnaire & notify Finsura should the event exceed 1,000 or more people. You will also be required to provide us with a Risk Management Plan.

All affiliated playgroups must maintain a ratio of one(1) adult to five(5) children at all times during Playgroup events or excursions, but for excursions or Events, in or near water, please see below.

#### ***In or near Water***

Any outing involving swimming, in-water or activities near water such as beach, swimming pool or pond must be notified to Finsura by email. Whilst on such outings, during in-water activities or activities near water such as picnic on the beach, swimming pool or pond, a ratio of 1 Adult to 1 child must always be maintained.

#### ***Hired Equipment***

Owners / Operators of items hired for use at affiliated Playgroup activity (such as but not limited to rides, jumping castles etc) must have their own public liability cover – minimum \$10,000,000. Written proof of this cover, i.e. a current Certificate of Currency, must be obtained from the owners/operators and saved by the Playgroup. For Jumping Castle, the operator's employee must be in attendance at all time during its operation. **30 days notice is required.**

**NOTE Purchase of jumping castle – Affiliated playgroups are strongly discouraged from owning jumping castles due to inherent risk of injury and associated liability in event of collapse of mishandling. There is no insurance cover if an affiliated playgroup decide to purchase such equipment. Please contact Finsura if you need further clarification.**

#### ***Contractors/Suppliers/Stallholders***

All contractors/suppliers/stallholders must have their own public liability cover – minimum \$10,000,000. Written proof of this cover, i.e. a current Certificate of Currency must be obtained from contractors/suppliers/stallholders and retained by the Playgroup. This applies to financial members holding stall at playgroup event unless all their proceeds are donated to playgroup.

### ***Safety***

Where a affiliated play group feels that safety may be at risk due to the condition of the premises including its equipment, it should advise Playgroup WA Inc immediately as well as providing a letter to the owner of the premises outlining the situation and requesting immediate action to remedy the problem. In some cases, owner may require photo(s) of the defects or issues. It is prudent for all affiliated playgroups to check the premises/facility regularly.

### ***Meetings and Newsletters***

To protect the Association members' insurers interests, affiliated Playgroups must NOT provide any insurance information other than the official Insurance Information Leaflet, which is available from the Association. In addition please check with the Association for any information on insurance updates.

### ***Responsibility***

**Parents/carers have a duty of care to all members of the public, including children, whilst attending playgroup sessions & activities. All efforts should be made to avoid situations where accident can occur or it can be proven your actions are negligent.**

Parents/carers are fully responsible for the safety and discipline of their own children and/or those in their care and they should take all necessary steps to ensure accidents do not happen. Children should be supervised at all times. Supervision of children should always be by a specific, responsible adult who has agreed with the parents to take care of the child. Childminding is not a part of Playgroup: it is the duty of all individuals to ensure they protect the children in their care from injury. Members should be aware that they are not permitted by law to hit another person's child. Action by children or adults which may place the group or Association in a liable situation cannot be permitted and every effort should be made to ensure that this situation does not occur.

## **Common Issues for Playgroup Claims**

### **Personal Accident claims**

All affiliated Playgroups should note that these claims are paid according to policy terms and limits- the benefits payable are always capped at certain amounts. The main problem that occurs is that in the event of an accident members try to claim for medical bills. All services that attract a Medicare benefit are not claimable under your cover. This applies even where a medical provider charges over the schedule fee. Bills from providers such as physiotherapists and dentists would be covered normally after any private health fund benefit has been claimed.

### **Public Liability claims**

Affiliated Playgroups should try to get forms signed by all members. This should stand as a form of “waiver” against most liability claims. This is a good risks management practice. Unlike Personal Accident claims, Liability claims are strictly negligence based *so it is vital that Playgroups never admit liability* if an accusation of negligence is raised after an incident. All incidents at playgroup should be reported promptly to your coordinator & Playgroup WA Head office or as soon as reasonably practical to Finsura using the Incident Report form.

### **Property Damage claims**

Please notify any potential loss immediately as delays in notification can prejudice a claim. When completing a claim form check all relevant sections are completed - *Important-please clearly write what payee name is to appear on any cheque payment from your insurer. Otherwise all payments will be paid to “Playgroup WA”.*

Affiliated Playgroups should all keep an inventory of items they own and any purchase receipts or user manuals where applicable. Lodging claim forms without proof of ownership inevitably delays or reduces claim settlements.

Always submit new quotes for replacement items as costs may have increased since the item was purchased.

All burglary and malicious damage claims should be reported to the police who normally give an event/incident number.

Please note that the policy does have an excess that varies depending on the type of loss.

NOTE: Theft of property (including money) in open air is not covered, so ensure any money box is kept in a locked cabinet or drawer. Affiliated Playgroups are required to take all reasonable precautions to prevent loss or damage to property insured.

All Affiliated Playgroups should be claiming only for items that they own or are clearly responsible for under a lease. Actual damage to structures or fittings owned by a landlord should normally be claimed under the landlord’s own insurance.

### **Further Information**

For any further assistance contact Playgroup WA Inc directly.

For further specific insurance information and advice please contact Finsura Insurance.

**NOTE: This summary is not the policy wording and any clarification required should be read in conjunction with the policy wording. Please contact Finsura for further details.**

## Frequently asked questions

### Introduction

Playgroup WA (Inc) negotiates on behalf of playgroups and their families, to obtain reasonably priced insurance for you, your child and your playgroup's toys and equipment. The following are some general questions that are often asked. Any incidents which result in injury must be reported to the Playgroup WA head office to be handled by the insurer.

### **When am I, and the families attending our playgroup, covered by Playgroup WA's insurance?**

- Your child, family or your child's carer are covered (in most circumstances) travelling to and from playgroup or excursions and while at your playgroup. This cover also includes voluntary work when participating in activities or duties associated with Playgroup WA. Playgroup WA purchases \$20 million public liability insurance, child and adult accident and injury insurance and property and contents insurance for your playgroup.

### **It is important to note that to ensure insurance coverage, all families attending your Playgroup must be financial members of Playgroup WA and your playgroup must be registered with Playgroup WA. Are visitors covered?**

- The legal liability of a playgroup towards bona fide visitors as third parties is covered. This does not mean that families can continue coming to playgroup indefinitely without taking out membership and insurance. Prospective members are covered for two consecutive visits, but must then take out membership with Playgroup WA to ensure that they are covered by our insurance.

### **What are the amounts of cover?**

- The benefits available under Playgroup WA's injury and accident insurance policy varies according to what the injury is and whether you have private health cover or not. They apply for all Playgroup WA members aged 0-90. You cannot claim the "gap" between Medicare benefit and the doctor's charge under Playgroup WA insurance cover.
- Your playgroup also has theft of or damage to property and money, broken glass and fixtures insurance. There are maximum amounts covered for each circumstance as well as maximum amounts payable under the insurance policy. A varying Excess for each and every claim also applies, depending on the type of event that has caused the damage/theft. If an accident, injury, damage or theft occurs at playgroup, please contact Playgroup WA's head office immediately for further information.



**Our Playgroup meets through the school holidays and some people bring their school age children with them. Are they covered by insurance?**

- Yes, insurance coverage is extended to all children under the age of 18 of member families. Generally playgroup is for 0-5year olds however, we know there are occasions when older children will attend. While not outside Playgroup WA insurance, it is important to realise that the risks of accident and injury increase with a greater age range of children. Your playgroup will need to decide if it will allow older children to attend on an occasional basis and what measures will be taken to ensure the safety of all playgroup participants (ie: separate playing area, toys, supervised activities ...).

**Our Home Playgroup meets in different members' homes each week. Does this pose a problem for insurance?**

- Recent advice from our insurance broker is that you will only be covered if the playgroup is in the home of a current financial member of Playgroup WA and that non-members' (or expired members') homes will not be covered for playgroup activities. Please also take note of your responsibilities to ensure a safe and risk free venue for your playgroup. It is your responsibility as a parent/carer to make sure that the immediate environment is safe and free from danger for your children.

**What if non members use our outdoor (or indoor) equipment and toys?**

- It can sometimes be difficult or impossible to prevent third parties (non members) from using your property, or property for which you are responsible. We advise you to prominently display notices disclaiming responsibility for any injuries sustained by third parties using your equipment or toys. Equally any notices providing safety information (eg: limiting the use of equipment to children over a certain age, size, etc.) should be prominently displayed.

**Are we covered for working bees, extra playgroup sessions, fund raising, events or displays?**

- Yes, as long as it is a recognized normal playgroup activity that all participants can attend. Please note that, if you hire rides or amusements activities for these events, like fun days and picnics etc, you will need to ensure that the Third Party companies have their own Public Liability cover & that a Certificate of Currency confirming their insurance is kept on file.

You are no longer required to complete the Event/Excursion Notification document UNLESS you anticipate 1,000 or more attendees.

**NOTE: WATER ACTIVITIES – A Ratio of 1:1**

**For ANY event involving water based activities or you are going to be near water (such as a park with open pond, swimming pools, beach, river etc) an Adult to Child ratio of 1:1 must be maintained at ALL times**



### **Can Family Day Care Providers and paid carers attend our Playgroup?**

- Yes. A Family Day Care provider takes out family membership in their name and pays for one family membership. The provider also needs to supply the playgroup with details of those children in their care (names, ages etc.) in the Playgroup Attendance Book. The children will therefore be covered as part of the provider's family.

### **What happens when an accident occurs at Playgroup?**

- If an accident does occur, please notify the Playgroup WA's head office immediately and complete an incident form. This report form allows you as a playgroup to identify how accidents can be prevented in the future. ***This form does not constitute a claim for insurance.***
- The insurance company has special forms for making an insurance claim and these are available from the Playgroup WA's head office. Once you have completed the form, please submit it through the Playgroup WA's head office for forwarding to the insurance company.

**Please contact Playgroup WA if you have any questions about insurance. We will ask the insurance company for clarification.**

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Insurance cover can only go so far and it is important to remember that just because you have "insurance" doesn't mean you can be lax about safety &/or security.

You are responsible for making sure that the venue or location for your playgroup is safe and free of risks. This means checking for broken equipment, glass, syringes, scalding hazards and etc on a regular basis. These checks should happen before you allow children free range at the venue and need to be done in your regular location or on special excursions.

You need to report all incidents and accidents that happen at your playgroup. Even if you don't think much of it at the time, it could be part of an insurance claim in the future.

You must never admit liability. Even if you are convinced that an incident is your entire fault, you may not understand the basis of liability in any particular situation and it may harm a later claim.

### **LEASE AGREEMENTS:**

Before you sign a lease or agreement with a playgroup venue, make sure that you are not being asked to take on more than your playgroup is insured for. Playgroup WA's Insurance broker will vet any lease agreements before you sign them, to ensure that you fall within the current scope of insurance provided.

**(INSURANCE INFORMATION - effective 03/11/2016.)**



Playgroup WA

## Event Questionnaire

PLEASE NOTE FORM MUST BE SENT TO FINSURA MINIMUM TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO  
EVENT DATE FOR APPROVAL

Name of your Playgroup:

---

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone / E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Event:** (Please supply a copy of the event program listing all exhibitors/amusement provided if one is available) If you are participating in a community event organised by council or other body, please state so

---

---

What is your organisation's past experience at running this type of event?

---

Date, Time and Duration of Event:

---

Location of Event: (name of location and address)

---

---

How many people are expected to attend?

---

Will Food be sold at this event? (if yes, please provide details)

---

---

Will Alcohol be sold at this event? (if yes, please provide details – also check lease agreement)

---

---

Will security look check for alcohol being bought into the event?

---

How many stalls (not run by playgroup) are being used to sell anything?

---



## Playgroup Association of WA Event Questionnaire

PLEASE NOTE FORMS MUST BE SENT MINIMUM TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT DATE.

How many stall holders run licensed/registered businesses? See notes below about separate PL insurance where applicable

---

Will there be entertainment at this event? (if yes, please describe such as jumping castle, pony rides etc) – see notes about separate PL insurance below

---

---

---

Do performers hold your organisation responsible for any injuries they suffer? (if yes, please provide copy of contract)

---

Type of Seating during event:

---

Who provides security for your event? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the Security Company provide a Certificate of Insurance? \_\_\_\_\_

Will there be any medical personnel? (such as Ambulance, St Johns etc...If not do you have first aid personnel on site)

---

Distance to nearest hospital? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there an ambulance on site? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Is there an Emergency Evacuation Plan in place? What communication system is planned for the site? (such as loud speakers)

---

Are there any stands at the event? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is responsible for erecting stands? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Is the event held outdoors? (if yes, please describe fencing used to prohibit entry of any uninvited persons)

---

Do you have a Risk Management Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this plan in process? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**NOTE: ALL STALL HOLDERS, THIRD PARTY SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ENTERTAINERS need to have own Public Liability insurance and you need to obtain COPIES OF THEIR CURRENT PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE (CERTIFICATES OF CURRENCY) For Jumping castle, the operator or its employee must be in attendance during its operation**

Please e-mail, fax or post this form along with any Certificates of Currency to:-

Sarah Brown  
Finsura Insurance Broking (Australia) Pty Ltd  
PO Box 686, Castle Hill NSW 2154

E-mail: [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au)  
Phone: 02 9899 2999  
Fax: 02 9680 3023



# INCIDENT REPORT FORM

[Please answer all questions to best of knowledge]

NAME OF PLAYGROUP: \_\_\_\_\_ Affn No: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF CO-ORDINATOR, EMAIL ADDRESS & TEL NO: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE REPORTED TO CO-ORDINATOR: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME REPORTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLAYGROUP VENUE (if different from location of incident) \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF INCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME OF INCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF PERSON MAKING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_ INCIDENT REPORTED TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME INCIDENT LOCATION INSPECTED: \_\_\_\_\_ INSPECTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## PART 1: INJURED PERSON DETAILS

---

NAME OF INJURED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Surname) (Given Names)  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NO: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ (approx.) GENDER: MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐  
DOES CHILD WEAR ☐ GLASSES ☐ OTHER IMPAIRMENTS ☐ Give details of impairments

---

## PART 2: WITNESS \* DETAILS

\* Eyewitnesses witnessed the incident; circumstantial witnesses witnessed the events leading up to or following the incident. Additional witnesses' details should be provided on separate attachment.

---

ATTACH STATEMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

NAME OF WITNESS OR PARENT/CARER TO ACCIDENT/INCIDENT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Surname) (Given Names)  
Membership No : \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Joined : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF WITNESS: EYE WITNESS ☐ CIRCUMSTANTIAL WITNESS ☐

RELATIONSHIP TO INJURED PERSON:

\_\_\_\_\_

IF ANOTHER PARTY RESPONSIBLE, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

### PART 3: PERSONAL INJURY DETAILS

---

PART OF BODY INJURED (Place tick in appropriate box)

Head & Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hip	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hands/ Fingers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eyes or Face	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoulder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back & Trunk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arms / Wrists	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feet and toes	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Other, or multiple, please describe:

---

NATURE OF INJURY (Place tick in appropriate box)

Multiple	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor Bruise - Not Disabling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concussion/Unconscious (Serious)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fracture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Major Bruising - Disabling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burns/Scalds – requiring medical attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sprain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor Cut/Laceration - No Stitches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Superficial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dislocation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cut/Laceration requiring Stitches	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Apparent Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ligament Damage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor Concussion	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If Other, describe:

---

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT (by you or independent witness). Please give a complete summary of the incident:

---

---

---

WAS INJURED PERSON TAKEN TO:      TREATMENT BY FIRST AIDER ☐      DOCTOR/HOSPITAL ☐      AMBULANCE ☐

NAME OF FIRST AIDER/ PERSON ATTENDING: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT NO: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ OTHER (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

IF THIRD PARTY/CONTRACTOR AT FAULT: THIRD PARTY/CONTRACTOR'S NAME:

---

---

### PART 4: PROPERTY DAMAGE (complete if there is property damage)

---

ITEM DAMAGED:

---

DETAILS:

---

IF VIEWED AND BY WHOM:

---

PHOTOS TAKEN AND BY WHOM:

---

---

### PART 5: LOCATION OF INCIDENT (Please tick in appropriate box)

---

Car Park Ramps	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Areas - others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrance/Exit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Office Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moving Walkways	<input type="checkbox"/>
Escalators	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal Ramp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elevators	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilet Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children's Play Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Common Areas - Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car Parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

# INCIDENT REPORT FORM

If Other, describe:

---

**PART 6: TYPE OF INCIDENT** (Please tick in appropriate box)**If Slip and Fall of Person:**

Lack of Barrier	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uneven Floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kids running	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rainwater on floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tripped over Object	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steps/Stairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floor Slippery (Surface)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetable/Fruit items on floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car Park Stops/Bollards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Person running	<input type="checkbox"/>		
No apparent reason	<input type="checkbox"/>				

If Other, describe:

---

**Type of floor surface where incident happened**

Marble	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tile	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carpet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speed hump	<input type="checkbox"/>
Terrazzo	<input type="checkbox"/>	Timber	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bitumen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dirt/grass/garden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vinyl	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Other, describe:

**Caught in:**

Door	<input type="checkbox"/>	Escalator/Elevator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machinery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Other, describe:

**Stepping on or Striking Against:**

Display Stands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Escalator/Elevator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharp Edges/Protruding Objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doors	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If Other, describe:

**Other**

Falling Objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Falling objects, please describe:
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-----  
Signature of person making this incident Report

Name :

**Note:**

It is important that you keep accurate records of injuries or accidents at Playgroup involving children, adults and/or visitors

- Record incidents immediately while information is fresh
- Forward incident report to Finsura Insurance Broking with copy to Playgroup WA

Send to : Finsura Insurance Broking (Aust) Pty Ltd  
PO Box 686, Castle Hill, NSW 1765  
Or email to [playgroup@finsura.com.au](mailto:playgroup@finsura.com.au)  
Tel : 1800 252 712 or 02 9899 2999

Dated:.....



FOR THE MONTH OF \_\_\_\_\_

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## CASH RECEIPTS - INCOME

[illegible]

**Petty Cash Book & Reconciliation Statement  
FOR THE MONTH OF November**

Date	Voucher No.	Details	Kitchen Supplies	Activity Items	Stationary/postage	Cleaning Materials	Income	Total	Balance
Brought Forward					21.50	38.00	120.00	225.50	40.00
11/1/12	1	Glue		3.00				3.00	37.00
11/2/12	2	Coles - kitchen	4.00			6.00		10.00	27.00
11/11/12	3	Tea	3.00					3.00	24.00
11/15/12	4	Stamps			4.50			4.50	19.50
11/26/12	5	Pencils		5.00				5.00	14.50
11/29/12	6	Card			3.00			3.00	11.50
11/30/12	Cheque	Reimbursement					28.50	-28.50	40.00
TOTAL THIS MONTH			7.00	8.00	7.50	6.00	28.50	28.50	40.00
Carried Forward			47.00	14.00	29.00	44.00	148.50	254.00	40.00

This Petty Cash tin operates on a permanent balance of \$40.00. At any one time, the money in the tin plus any vouchers not yet recorded should equal \$40.00. In this case the reconciliation was done after reimbursement.

**PETTY CASH RECONCILIATION**

AMOUNT IN TIN		
Notes/Coins	No.	\$
\$10	1	10.00
\$5	3	15.00
\$2	1	2.00
\$1	2	2.00
50c	1	0.50
20c	8	1.60
10c	4	0.40
5c	0	0.00
Voucher 7		31.50
<b>TOTAL</b>		8.50
		40.00

## Monthly Treasurers Report

FOR THE PERIOD 01/11/2012 - 30/11/2012

Opening Balance at Bank 01/11/12					1446.50
<b>Plus Income</b>					
Term Fees		140.00			
Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees		240.00			
Fundraising (Raffle)		20.00			
Other		10.00	410.00		
<b>Less Expenses</b>					
Rent - November		80.00			
Equipment (1)		150.00			
Fundraising (2)		500.00			
Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees		240.00			
Petty Cash		28.50			
Other		8.00	1006.50		
<b>CLOSING BALANCE AT BANK AS AT 30/11/2012</b>					<b>850.00</b>

Notes Regard Above:

- (1) New childrens tables & chairs from Toyland
- (2) Supplies for Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser including drinks - Event on Sunday 9th December

### BANK RECONCILIATION FOR THE MONTH OF November 2012

Balance brought forward 30/10/2012			1446.50
Add November Receipts			410.00
			<b>1856.50</b>
Less November payments			1006.50
Balance carried forward 30/11/2012			<b>850.00</b>
Balance as per Bank Statement			1365.00
Add outstanding deposits			
Term Fees	40.00		
Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees	60.00		
Other Income	10.00		110.00
			<b>1475.00</b>
Less unpresented cheques			
9005	500.00		
9006	125.00		625.00
			<b>850.00</b>

## Annual Treasurers Report

FOR THE PERIOD 01/01/2012 TO 31/12/2012 (each playgroup will have its own financial year)

<b>OPENING BALANCE AT BANK AT 01/01/2012</b>				<b>685.00</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Term Fees		980.00		
Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees		600.00		
Fundraising		1306.00		
Other Income		25.00		
			<b>2911.00</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>				
Rent		560.00		
Toys & Equipment		1380.00		
Fundraising		500.00		
Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees		600.00		
Petty Cash		140.00		
Other		8.00		
			<b>3188.00</b>	
<b>CLOSING BALANCE AT BANK AS AT 31/12/06</b>				<b>408.00</b>

## CASH PAYMENTS - EXPENSES

[illegible]



FOR THE MONTH OF \_\_\_\_\_

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**Playgroup Name:**  
**Session Day:**

[illegible]

# Attendance Register

**Playgroup Name:**

**Date:**

**Day:**

**Time:**

Parent/Caregiver Name	Child's Name	Time in	Signature	Time out	Signature
Alice Johnson (Parent)	Andrew (Child 1)	)	)	)	)
	Bobby (Child 2)	) 9.30am	) xxxxxxxx	) 11.30am	) xxxxxxxx
Betty Smith (Parent)	Carol (Child 1)	)	)	)	)
	Debbie (Child 2)	) 9.32am	) xxxxxxxx	) 11.33am	) xxxxxxxx
Cris Jones (Grandparent)	Ellie (Child 1)	9.33am	xxxxxxx	11.34am	xxxxxxx
Delys Reynolds (Parent)	Frankie (Child 1)	)	)	)	)
	Gemma (Child 2)	) 9.35am	) xxxxxxxx	) 11.36am	) xxxxxxxx

For insurance purposes all parents and caregivers attending playgroup MUST sign in and out and assign times for both. If a parent has more than one child, brackets can be used so only one signature is needed. These sheets need to be kept for 30 years (electronic copies are fine). If an incident occurs at playgroup the attendance sheet needs to be attached to the incident report and insurance claim.

## XXXXXX PLAYGROUP Enrolment Form

### Parent/Carer(s) Details:

Full name: ..... Gender: ..... DOB: ...../...../.....  
Full name: ..... Gender: ..... DOB: ...../...../.....  
Postal address: .....  
Telephone: ..... Mobile: .....  
Email address: .....  
Country of birth: ..... Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander: Y/N ..... Disability: Y/N .....

### Child/ren(s) Details:

Full name: ..... Gender: ..... DOB: ...../...../.....  
Country of birth: ..... Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander: Y/N ..... Disability: Y/N .....

Full name: ..... Gender: ..... DOB: ...../...../.....  
Country of birth: ..... Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander: Y/N ..... Disability: Y/N .....

Full name: ..... Gender: ..... DOB: ...../...../.....  
Country of birth: ..... Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander: Y/N ..... Disability: Y/N .....

### In case of emergency:

Name: ..... Telephone: .....

**Please turn over...**

Updated January 2018

### Additional Information:

XXXXX Playgroup meets on \_\_\_\_\_ mornings \_\_\_\_\_ am – \_\_\_\_\_ am.  
Each Parent/Carer is asked to bring along one piece of fruit for each child and a hat for outside play.

Fees are currently set as \_\_\_\_\_ annual/per term /casual and payable by the \_\_\_\_\_ date / week of term. This fee covers the cost of tea/coffee, craft materials, etc. In addition, an annual membership fee (see below) with Playgroup WA (Inc) is required on joining.

Please tick the box if you are happy for your email address to be provided to Playgroup WA (Inc) so they can communicate with you and inform you of any upcoming events, etc ☐

### NB Examples of extras you may like to add. This is up to the individual playgroups.

- Clarify when payment is due and something about refunds, i.e. non-refundable
- Add an immunisation tick box so you know who might be vulnerable at playgroup
- Add a box re photo consent for Facebook page
- A comment - by signing this form you agree to abide by the policies and guidelines of this playgroup, etc

Parent/Carer's signature: .....

### Playgroup WA (Inc) Fees:

Family (\$35.00) ☐ Playgroup Plus (\$15.00) ☐ Family Day Carer (\$35.00) ☐  
(Health Care Card)

Paid Elsewhere ☐ Membership ID ..... Volunteer (No fee and no children attending) ☐  
(Another playgroup)

Date received:...../...../..... Receipt No: .....

### Enrolment Officer Signature:.....

Date fee given to Treasurer:...../...../.....

Date entered on Playgroup WA (Inc) portal...../...../.....

Date Direct Debit to Playgroup WA (Inc)...../...../.....



# PLAYGROUP CERTIFICATE

*This Certificate is presented to:*

---

*who is leaving* \_\_\_\_\_

*to start* \_\_\_\_\_

*Your friends wish you well in all of  
your adventures!*