

Media Release

Playgroup NSW embraces the NSW Government's plan to invest \$2 million in Start Strong Pathways

Playgroup NSW CEO Nadene Lee was invited to join the NSW Minister for Early Childhood Education, Sarah Mitchell for her announcement of \$2 million to support young children's pathways into preschool in Tamworth today.



L to R: Sarah Grinham, Occasional Care Association; Meg Mendham, CEO, CCSA; Minister Mitchell; Nadene Lee, CEO Playgroup NSW

The NSW Government announced \$4.5 million in grants for NSWs' youngest learners. Minister for Early Childhood Education Sarah Mitchell announced through the Start Strong Pathways plan, that "children too young for preschool will benefit from \$2 million in NSW Government funding for educational programs supporting children to prepare for preschool. Services like playgroups and toy libraries play a vital role in offering a pathway for our children into early childhood education".

The Minister said "Funding is available for not-for-profits that feel they can offer the educational component to children from birth to 3 years of age. Bigger organisations like Playgroup NSW may apply for a larger piece of the pie, to run something right across the state or a region, or it may relate to smaller organisations that work in towns for a more local approach".

As the peak body representing playgroups across NSW, Playgroup NSW is active in over 70% of postcodes, and is dedicated to supporting families and strengthening local communities through playgroups. "Playgroup NSW embraces the opportunity to increase participation and to make playgroups more accessible to all families in NSW", Nadene Lee, CEO, Playgroup NSW said. "This opens up the potential for Playgroup NSW to expand connections between playgroups and early education providers, and to build awareness of the high quality learning opportunity that Early Childhood services, including playgroups provide for children from birth".

Research shows that children who attend playgroup during early childhood have significantly better development when they start school than those who do not attend, and Playgroup NSW has long advocated for playgroup participation to be a core component of a government policy framework for children aged 0-5 years.

"We are pleased to receive recognition from the NSW Government that Playgroup NSW is well positioned to create new initiatives and evolve our service model to increase

participation in playgroups in NSW for families with young children”, Nadene Lee said. “This opportunity will build on the high level of interest in the Play Baby Initiative that Playgroup NSW launched in February this year that offers all families with babies up to 12 months with free membership. To date, 8,000 new families have become members under the initiative.

Applications for the Start Strong Pathways program will open at the end of November.

Media Contact: Nadene Lee, CEO, Playgroup NSW: 0418 863 694

Link to the Minister’s release: <http://www.playgroupnsw.org.au/news/inthenews>

About Playgroup NSW

Playgroup NSW has provided an opportunity for parents and children to come together across towns and communities in NSW for over 45 years. Playgroup NSW has playgroups meeting in over 70% of postcodes across NSW, with close to 800 sessions per week.

As well as providing support, education and professional facilitators for families with special needs and those who are vulnerable, Playgroup NSW partners with a number of professional services, government agencies, non-government organisations and health professionals to deliver the best outcomes for children aged 0-5 in NSW.

Playgroup NSW reaches families in NSW through various communication methods, including playgroup sessions, social media, healthcare networks, community events, word of mouth, community and family social networks, as well as our website, media partners and a monthly eNewsletter sent to 30,000 families in NSW.

Website: www.playgroupnsw.org.au