

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Playgroup NSW announces arrival of major initiative for families with babies

Sydney, NSW, 15 February 2017 Not-for-profit membership association, Playgroup NSW launched Play Baby today, an initiative for families with children under 12 months old.

“Babies are never too young to start reaping the rewards of play, interaction and socialisation. That’s what playgroup is all about,” said Karen Bevan, the Playgroup NSW CEO.

Over 95,000 babies¹ are born each year in NSW. Ms Bevan said, “Through our Play Baby initiative we’re investing in babies by offering a one-year free Playgroup NSW membership to families with a baby under 12 months old.”

Andrew Johnson, the Advocate for Children and Young People, who launched the initiative said, “We are delighted to support Playgroup NSW’s Play Baby initiative. Studies show that the most rapid brain development occurs in the first three years of a child’s life. Increasing opportunities for young children to develop social skills and build confidence during this crucial time can lead to better long-term outcomes for children and their families.”

“As part of the Strategic Plan for Children and Young People, the NSW Government has committed to reducing the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable and increasing participation in early childhood education programs. We know that participation in play-based activities is an important part of early childhood learning.”

In 2012, Annette Ruhotas began attending the Oatley West Playgroup with eight-week old Georgia. Nicholas, born in 2016, is now a seasoned playgroup member too. She said, “Playgroup exposes babies and other young children to new experiences, as well as familiar patterns and activities which help their development. The earliest song Nicholas recognised was the ‘Welcome Song’ we sing every week at playgroup.”

For parents, weekly playgroup attendance provides the chance to meet parents in a similar situation, make new friends, learn from one another and develop a supportive local network.

Telethon Kids Institute [research](#) shows that children who attend playgroup are half as likely to have developmental vulnerabilities when they start primary school.

An annual family Playgroup NSW membership is usually \$39. It includes unlimited access to over 800 playgroups throughout NSW, comprehensive insurance that covers family members when attending Playgroup NSW affiliated playgroups and events as well as a range of discounts to entertainment and events for families with young children.

Parents of babies under 12 months can access free membership at playbaby.org.au

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About Playgroup NSW:

Celebrating its 45th anniversary in 2017, [Playgroup NSW is a not-for-profit membership association](#) that supports young children and their families to come together for playgroups and other activities that promote early childhood development and build connections between families and in communities. Every year, more than 20,000 babies, toddlers and preschool aged children attend over 800 playgroups throughout the state affiliated with Playgroup NSW.

LINKS:

- It Takes a Village to Raise a Child-The influence and impact of playgroups across Australia

<http://www.playgroupnsw.org.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/Research/Community%20Playgroup%20Quantitative%20Evaluation%20REPORT%202016.pdf>

1 Epidemiology and Evidence. *New South Wales Mothers and Babies 2015*. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health, 2016

