



Playgroup
NSW

**DISCOVER
BABY
PLAYGROUP!**

**BECOME A
MEMBER
FOR
FREE!**



playgroupnsw.org.au



PLAYGROUP IS FUN,
SOCIAL AND PART OF
OUR WEEKLY
ROUTINE.

WHAT IS PLAYGROUP?

At playgroups parents and carers get together with their young children for a couple of hours each week to connect, learn through play and most importantly, have fun. Playgroup NSW offers community playgroups catering to a range of children from babies to school age.

Hundreds of these general playgroups meet across NSW each week. We also have groups focusing on families with babies, fathers, grandparents, Indigenous families, first-time mothers, various languages and more. In addition, we run a variety of facilitated playgroups and peer support groups for families with children who have additional needs.

WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT FOR BABIES?

In their first few years, babies develop skills that lay the foundation for life. From learning to laugh through to learning to walk, these important connections and experiences will be shaped by you as a parent. Babies' brains are amazing. They are born ready to learn. From birth a baby's brain grows rapidly and will double in size before the baby turns one year old.

Play is essential for brain development. Play and interaction stimulates the baby's brain to grow and develop, and this forms a strong foundation from which all future learning depends on. Playing is one of the most important things a baby or young child can do. Starting from birth any time spent playing supports their early development.

Play supports babies and young children to:

- feel loved, happy and safe;
- develop movement skills (e.g. sitting and crawling);
- develop thinking and problem-solving skills;
- learn social skills (e.g. taking turns and eye contact);
- develop language skills to express their needs (e.g. 'I want car'); and
- build confidence and a sense of belonging.

Parents are a babies' first and most important teacher. Play and interaction with your baby's provides the best learning environment.



BABY PLAYGROUPS

Baby Playgroups are a great way to help stimulate and nurture your baby's important brain development in an informal and relaxed way. These groups bring together families of babies from 0-12 months, encouraging learning through play and building social connections with families as they begin their journey through parenthood.

**FIND A BABY
PLAYGROUP
NEAR YOU**

To find a Baby Playgroup in your area, visit our website at playgroupnsw.org.au and click on the "Find a Playgroup" icon. You can search by post code and/or by "Type of Group".

If there is not a Baby Playgroup near you and you would like to start one, ring us on 1800 171 882.

PLAYGROUP FOR CHILDREN 12 MONTHS AND OVER

The first 12 months of your baby's life will rush by. After a year, your Baby Playgroup may decide to transition to a playgroup for children up to school age or, you may decide to take your one year old (and any other young children you may have) to another Playgroup NSW affiliated playgroup in your local area that caters for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. To find a playgroup in your area visit playgroupnsw.org.au



BENEFITS OF BABY PLAYGROUP

Babies are never too young to start reaping the rewards of play. The movement, interaction, activities and play ideas that Baby Playgroups provide are important for developing minds and bodies. Baby Playgroups allow exploration of a different environment, with different toys, new textures, colours, noises, shapes and of course, people to discover.

Playgroups give babies the reassurance of being with their parent or carer as they learn to interact, share and relate to other babies and adults in a safe environment. This builds confidence, develops social skills and promotes self esteem.

Baby Playgroups aren't just for babies. They are a haven where other parents are experiencing the same joys, frustrations and sleepless nights as you. Your weekly playgroup session gives you the opportunity to meet other parents and carers, make new friends, discuss ideas, share parenting experiences and learn about childhood development.

Making Baby Playgroup part of your weekly routine gives you and your baby a friendly and relaxed place to meet, where you can find friendship and support. Best of all, playgroups are fun!

PLAYGROUP HAS HELPED MY CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT FRIENDSHIP, BELONGING AND THAT PLAYING WITH OTHERS IS FUN.

AT PLAYGROUP BABIES WILL:

- Learn and develop new skills
- Have fun playing
- Socialise and enjoy being with other babies
- Experience new activities
- Explore a new world
- Play with a variety of toys
- Develop a weekly routine

AT PLAYGROUP YOU WILL:

- Meet other parents and carers
- Make new friends
- Share parenting experiences
- Learn about childhood development
- Play and have fun
- Spend quality time with your baby
- Become involved with your community





WHAT TO EXPECT AT PLAYGROUP

Playgroups are as different as the people in them, so the running and set up of each playgroup varies. Although there is no set routine for any playgroup, here is an example of a typical session:

ARRIVAL

Hello time, welcome new members and arrange play area and a few set activities.

ACTIVITIES

Baby play activities can include exploration of toys, floor play, tummy time and music play.

MORNING TEA

Shared morning tea with everyone.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

These can range from storytime, singing with actions, nursery rhymes and parachute play.

DEPARTURE

Everyone helps to tidy up before saying their goodbyes.

BABY PLAY AND ACTIVITIES BIRTH AND UP



At this age it may seem as though your newborn is fairly passive, however they are actually taking in lots of information about the world around them. Play at this time isn't so much about lively activity as it is about sensory exploration – the world is filled with objects to watch, touch and listen to.

During play, everyday routines and the activities suggested in this booklet, remember to talk with your baby! Copy their sounds and actions, talk about what they are looking at or what you are both doing together. Play with sounds and words e.g. “moo”, “splash”, “wheeee”. The more words a baby hears, the greater their language and interaction skills will be.

TUMMY TIME

It is important that play for newborns and babies includes regular, supervised Tummy Time and floor play. This time supports the baby's physical development, strengthening their head, neck,

and upper body muscles. Tummy Time helps to build the strength and coordination needed for rolling over, crawling, reaching and playing.

MUSIC FUN

Play some music and move with your baby – twirl, sway and bounce gently to the rhythm of the music with baby in your arms or in a baby sling.

AEROPLANES

Let your baby follow objects with her eyes – move your face, a rattle or a coloured toy. You could even play aeroplanes with your hands – flying through the air and landing on your baby's tummy!

LOOKING FUN

Babies learn by watching. Take your baby outside and hold him where they can see things moving – streamers, trees, washing on the line.

REMEMBER TO
ALSO TALK ABOUT
WHAT YOU ARE
SEEING



THREE MONTHS AND UP

At three months your baby's life is becoming more exciting because you will see her become stronger and more active. Your baby will want to reach out and grab nearby objects, even putting them in her mouth as a means of exploration. At three months your baby is no longer a passive observer, but entering an important phase in which she will develop a sense of control in her ever growing world.

LISTENING FUN

Use rice or pasta to fill a plastic container. Making sure the

container is well sealed, shake to one side or behind your baby and see if he can find it.

EXPLORING AND TOUCHING

Give your baby safe objects from around the house to allow her to explore different shapes and textures – plastic kitchen utensils, pots, soft toys, etc.

SINGING

Sing and help your baby do action songs: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Incy Wincy Spider, Round and Round the Garden, etc.

SIX MONTHS AND UP

At this age babies start to become more mobile – crawling around, rolling on the floor and using objects to pull themselves up on their feet. Playtime takes on a new dimension as babies develop motor skills enabling them to explore their surroundings in ways that weren't previously possible, allowing them to experience new activities through play.

WHERE'S TEDDY?

Hide a toy in one room of the house and carry your baby from room to room saying, "Where's teddy?" and telling him what rooms you are looking in. Clap and be excited when you find teddy together.

ROLL THE BALL

Roll a soft, brightly coloured ball to your baby and teach her how to stop it and push it back to you.

NOISE AND MOVEMENT

Fill different sized empty plastic bottles that will roll with small/colourful/noisy things, for example, bells, scrunched coloured paper, sand, rice or small stones. Secure lids tightly with several rounds of masking tape.





NINE MONTHS AND UP

Activities that allow your baby to practice gross motor skills such as crawling, climbing and walking will be particularly appealing to your baby as he approaches his first birthday. Even if your baby isn't walking at this stage, you may find that you still have to work hard to keep up. As babies become increasingly mobile, they want to engage in play that allows them to use these skills. They will often begin to try to do simple activities independently.

MUSIC FROM THE KITCHEN

Make fun instruments from upturned pots and pans with wooden spoons. Use your home-made instruments to explore different concepts, such as loud and soft, fast and slow.

OUTSIDE FUN

Take your baby into the backyard or go to the park. Let your baby feel different surfaces, let him sit and crawl on the grass or sand, feel stones and leaves with constant supervision as some objects can look like a tasty treat! Talk about and name objects as you explore together, helping her develop her language skills.

WATER FUN

Fill a low, wide container with some water and place it on the ground. Float small objects, such as flowers or corks in the water, and let your baby reach and splash. This is a great summer activity!

Safety note: Never leave your baby unattended when playing with or near water of any depth.

JOIN US NOW

Become a part of our Playgroup NSW community of parents, carers and children to play and have fun.

Family Membership can include up to five children and their parents and other caregivers.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Unlimited access to over 600 weekly playgroup sessions across NSW
- Free Digital Membership with Small Ideas NSW
- Comprehensive insurance that covers all family members when attending Playgroup NSW affiliated playgroups and events
- Monthly eNewsletter subscription that includes competitions for members to win free products and event tickets.

IT'S EASY TO BECOME A PLAYGROUP NSW MEMBER:

- To give families with young children and babies an extra incentive to start going to playgroup, we're offering FREE five year Playgroup NSW membership to all families with children up to five years.

Your local playgroup may charge a small additional weekly/term session fee to cover the ongoing costs of craft, toys and venue hire.



STARTING BLOCKS – helping you find quality early learning services.

Learning begins from the minute your child is born.

Whether they are being cared for at home or in childcare, it's important they have the opportunity to learn and develop every day.

Starting Blocks is a government website with trusted information on early childhood education and care, all in one place.

It's a great starting point to:

- find childcare services and learn about their National Quality Standard ratings
- learn about your child's developmental milestones
- find tips on starting childcare
- find tips on activities to do at home to encourage your child's learning and development.



StartingBlocks.gov.au

Your first step into early childhood education & care



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