



ONE OF THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Playgroup NSW connects people to strengthen child, family and community wellbeing through playing, learning and building communities of support.

We are a membership association that

supports 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.

In 2014/2015 we had more than 12,000 active family members, with over 20,000 children attending playgroups. This makes Playgroup NSW one of the state's largest civil society organisations.

Playgroup NSW is supported by State and Federal government funding, membership fees, one-off grants and corporate partnerships.

What is playgroup?

Playgroup is a lightly structured, informal gathering where parents, carers, babies and children up to school age come together in a relaxed and friendly environment to connect, play and learn.

Sessions are usually held once a week and may involve craft activities, outdoor play and morning tea.

Community Playgroups are run by local parents on a voluntary basis. They comprise the majority of playgroups affiliated with Playgroup NSW. These groups cater to a range of children from babies to school age.

In addition to hundreds of these general playgroups that meet across NSW each week, there are many groups that satisfy more specific needs of parents and children ranging from baby playgroups, to bilingual groups, intergenerational, dads groups and more.

Playgroup NSW also offers facilitated playgroups and peer support groups for families with particular needs. For example:

- **Supported Playgroups** are facilitated groups that bring together families who may otherwise not access playgroups or who require other supports.
- **PlayConnect Playgroups** are facilitated peer support groups specifically for children aged 0-6 years with autism or similar behaviours.
- **MyTime Peer Support Groups** are for anyone caring for a child up to age 16 with a disability or chronic medical condition. MyTime gives parents the chance to socialise and share ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of their caring role.

Our reach

- Over 800 playgroups covering 70% of NSW postcodes
- Approximately 60 of these are facilitated groups for families with particular needs
- Almost 1,000 playgroup sessions held each week
- An estimated 20,000 children a year attending playgroups affiliated with us
- 1,000+ parent and carer member volunteers run our community playgroups
- Over 7,000 children, parents and carers attend our free community events during National Playgroup Week and throughout the year.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS TELL US

“ Playgroup has helped my children learn about friendship, belonging and that playing with others is fun. ”

**Mother,
Prairiewood Playgroup**

98.7%
WOULD RECOMMEND
PLAYGROUP TO
OTHERS

How attending playgroup helps

Children

- **90.87%** say their child's development has benefitted
- **81.5%** agree their child's social skills have improved

Parents and carers

- **90%** say they feel more connected to their community
- **80%** feel the experience has provided them with the confidence to find and use family services
- **78%** have gained or improved their knowledge about play ideas and strategies
- **63.5%** say their knowledge and skills improve because they are continually provided with helpful play ideas and strategies to use at home.

75%
SAY THEIR SOCIAL
SUPPORT NETWORK
INCREASES AS FRIENDSHIPS
WITH PARENTS
AND CARERS
DEVELOP

Playgroup benefits children

Creative and unstructured learning through play is essential to children's development, helping them explore and understand their world.

Recent Australian research shows

- The benefits of playgroup are seen across all domains of child development: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development and communication
Playgroups have a wide reach impacting about 20% of disadvantaged children and close to 40% of less disadvantaged Australian children
- Children who do not attend playgroups are 1.78 times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census at school entry
- Playgroups are universally beneficial for children from a range of different backgrounds.

Telethon Kids Institute. It takes a village to raise a child: The Influence and Impact of Playgroups Across Australia March 2016.

Playgroup benefits parents and communities

Playgroup enables

parents and carers to spend quality time with their children while creating their own social networks, making friends and sharing ideas and experiences.

Playgroup provides critical social infrastructure

bringing local families together and forming an important low cost network of supports and community information.