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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

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December already! We must have been having fun because time really has flown this year!

As we reach the close of another busy and joyful year, we want to pause and reflect on the incredible contributions of our playgroup volunteers.

Your impact: From welcoming new families to creating safe, fun, and nurturing spaces for children, your dedication has helped build a stronger, more connected community.

Your generosity: Week after week, you've given your time, energy, and creativity to ensure our playgroups thrive.

Your legacy: Every smile, every shared story, and every playful moment has left a lasting mark on the families who join us.

This season is the perfect time to celebrate the warmth



Emily Caska

Chief Executive Officer
Playgroup NSW

and kindness you bring. On behalf of all the families and children who benefit from your efforts, we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season filled with rest, laughter, and cherished moments with loved ones. May the new year bring fresh inspiration and continued community spirit.

Don't forget our office will be closed between Friday 19th December 2025 and Monday 5th January 2026. Be sure to check with your local playgroup as to when sessions start back up - most playgroups will reconvene on the week of 2nd February 2026.

Thank you for being the heart of our playgroups. We couldn't do it without you!

GUIDE TO YOUR END OF YEAR PARTIES

The end of 2025 is coming! It is a good time to start thinking about how you would like to celebrate the end of the year with your group.

If you are hosting a party, please register your details as we might be able to come along and join the fun!

And don't forget to send your party snaps to us at marketing@playgroupnsw.org.au or tag us on socials @playgroupnsw (please be sure to obtain consent from all families featured within the photos).

[Register Your Party](#)

Here are some handy tips and hints to ensure your party is a success!

1. **Invite your group to get involved!** It would be good to have a team of at least 3-4 people who can make the event a success.

2. Pick a date, time and venue.

- Choose a date in late November or early December (before families get too busy).
- Is holding your party on a Saturday a possibility? This way both parents/siblings/families can attend too.
- Choose a family friendly time of day.
- Venue ideas: Your usual playgroup space, a local park (with shade, toilets, easy parking, and playground)

3. Set a simple plan

- Keep it short and sweet — around 1.5 to 2 hours is ideal.
- Example schedule:
 - Arrival and free play
 - Christmas craft or sensory activity
 - Shared morning or afternoon tea
 - Santa visit / gift exchange
 - Group photo and farewell song

4. Decorations and setup

- Keep it festive but easy to clean up:
 - Tinsel, fairy lights, and paper chains (this could even be a craft activity the week before!)
 - A Christmas tree (felt or mini artificial trees are great for little ones)
 - A “photo booth” with Christmas props or a backdrop
 - Involve families — children love helping decorate!

5. Activities and Games

- Choose age-appropriate, low-cost fun.
- Games:
 - Pass the parcel (small toddler-safe prizes)

- Musical statues to Christmas songs
- “Find the Candy Cane” scavenger hunt
- Crafts:
 - Paper plate Santa faces
 - Handprint reindeer
 - Christmas cards for family or local aged care residents

6. Food and Drinks

- Encourage families to bring a plate to share if appropriate.
- Provide water jugs and cups — avoid sugary drinks.
- A tablecloth and serviettes and festive décor for table(s)
- Keep it simple, balanced and allergy-aware:
 - Fresh fruit platters
 - Crackers, cheese, veggie sticks, dips
 - Mini cupcakes or festive biscuits
 - Sausage sizzle if there is a BBQ

7. Santa Visit or Gift Exchange (Optional)

- Option 1: Santa Visit
 - A volunteer or family member dresses up (keep it gentle for shy children).
 - Santa can hand out a small book to each child (provided by the family)
- Option 2: Secret Santa
 - Families bring a small book under \$10.
 - Children pick one from under the tree.

8. Memories and Connection

- Take a group photo (with permission).
- Send a thank-you message to families and volunteers after the event.

9. Budget-Friendly Tips

- Use leftover craft supplies or decorations from previous years.
- Ask local businesses for small donations (fruit platters, craft supplies, or a gift for Santa). Ask your Community Coordinator for a donations letter
- Share costs across families if hiring a venue.

10. Inclusive Touches

- Use neutral “festive season” language if your group is culturally diverse.
- Acknowledgement of Country (child friendly – ask for Community Coordinator for tips!)
- Include a song or story that celebrates kindness and giving.
- Make sure all children can participate — adapt for different ages and abilities.

11. After the Party

- Quick tidy-up roster: nominate 2–3 parents for pack-up duty.
- Thank everyone for their help and share plans for next year’s first session.

12. Insurance matters

- In the past, some Playgroups (depending on budget) have arranged entertainment e.g. bouncy castle, party entertainer etc. Some things to remember for insurance purposes:
 - Jumping castles must be operated by a licenced team member, provide their public liability insurance and provide their WWCC. Please forward to your Community Coordinator.
 - Party entertainers must provide their insurance to the group and their WWCC. Please forward to your Community Coordinator.
 - Any parties involving any body of water (beach, lake, pond, paddling pool) must include a ratio of one adult to one child.

[Activity Ideas](#)

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

As we marked International Volunteer Day on 5th December, we took a moment to reflect on the incredible contributions of the volunteers who have shaped Playgroup NSW throughout the years. Our playgroups are powered by generous people who give their time, their creativity and their compassion to ensure families felt welcomed, supported and connected.

Across countless sessions, volunteers have opened doors, set up activities, comforted little ones, and created the warm, inclusive environments that make playgroups such cherished community spaces. Your dedication has helped reduce loneliness, strengthened local networks, and supported children's early development in meaningful, lasting ways.

Looking back, it's clear that Playgroup NSW would not be what it is today without the people who stepped forward, quietly and consistently, to make a difference.

We are deeply grateful for every moment you've shared, every family you've supported, and every community you've helped grow.

To all of our volunteers: thank you. Your impact continues to echo through the children, families and communities you've touched.

PLAY IN PICTURES



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

3rd December

- International Day of Persons With Disabilities

4th December

- International Cookie Day
- National Hugging Day

5th December

- International Volunteer Day

7th December

- International Civil Aviation Day

10th December

- International Animal Rights Day

- Human Rights Day

11th December

- International Mountain Day

14th December

- Monkey Day

18th December

- International Migrants Day
- UN Arabic Language Day

24th December

- Christmas Eve

25th December

- Christmas Day

26th December

- Boxing Day
- International Fans Day

31st December

- New Year's Eve

'VOLUNTEERS AT PLAY' NOW ON YOUTUBE

Over the past few years, the Community Coordinators have held a number of webinars to inform volunteers of best practice and up to date information from Playgroup NSW.

The main ones are now available to watch on our YouTube channel in our 'Volunteers at Play' section.

These webinars cover topics such as:

- Community Coordinator/ Playgroup NSW role
- Finances/Treasurer information
- Insurance/ Hire Agreement
- Annual General Meetings
- Volunteer role/ recruiting volunteers /handover information
- Multi-sessions
- Events and excursions

Please be aware these are live recordings of our webinars. There are some repetitions in the webinars – be aware you can use the progress bar to skip ahead to only watch the sections you want to learn about.

Please contact your Community Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

[Watch the webinars here](#)

OUR ADVOCACY

Our submissions, publications and insights articles play a vital role in driving our advocacy at Playgroup NSW. By sharing evidence, community stories and on-the-ground experiences, we ensure the voices of families and children are heard where it matters most. These pieces don't just inform — they influence policy, spark conversation and help shape a stronger, more connected future for every child. Read our latest publications below:

- [Statement of Commitment to Ending Violence Against Women and Children](#)
- [The First 2000 Days: An Overview of Childhood Development](#)
- [Responding to the AEDC data 2024: Closing the Equity Gap](#)

- [Playgroup NSW Launches the Playgroup Collective at NSW Parliament House](#)
 - [Submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into the Thriving Kids Initiative](#)
 - [Impact Report: PlayStrong](#)
 - [Resources for Dads: Supporting Dads, Strengthening Families](#)
 - [Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services Hearing Transcript Improving Access to Early Childhood Health & Development Checks](#)
 - [Celebrating Playgroups: A Cornerstone of Early Learning in Australia](#)
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FIRST AID & WWCC

Do you currently hold a valid First Aid Certificate or Working with Children Check?

If so, we kindly ask that you complete the following form to help us keep our records up to date [here](#).

GOT A HEARTWARMING MOMENT TO SHARE?

We'd love to share your wonderful playgroup experiences with our community! If you're active on social media, please tag **Playgroup NSW** or use **#PlaygroupNSW** in your posts so we can feature your playgroup on our channels and spread the word about the amazing work you're doing!

About Playgroup NSW:

Playgroup NSW is a not-for-profit organisation that helps connect families and children to people and services in the community to positively impact their quality of life. For over 50 years, Playgroup NSW has delivered and linked over 65,000 families to vital services such as parent support groups and playgroups to foster early childhood development, navigate the challenges of parenting and build strong, resilient communities. With 550 playgroups operating each week and more than 26,000 sessions held annually, and support from over 500 dedicated volunteers, Playgroup NSW continues to make a significant difference in the lives of young children and their families across the state.

www.playgroupnsw.org.au



Our mailing address is:

PO Box Q403,
Queen Victoria Building,
NSW 1230

You are receiving this email because you opted in at our website or are a valued member of Playgroup NSW. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, [click here](#).