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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

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Welcome to the October edition of our volunteer newsletter.

October is here!

This month brings a mix of celebration, creativity, and connection. Whether you're lighting up your playgroup for Diwali, embracing the joy of Children's Week, or adding a touch of spooky fun, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Halloween Fun at Playgroup

Halloween doesn't have to be scary—it can be silly, sensory, and social! Try themed dress-up days, “boo bubbles” play, or a spooky scavenger hunt with friendly ghosts and pumpkins. You could even host a “Wacky Hat Day” for a low-cost twist on costumes.

Diwali: Festival of Lights

Diwali is a wonderful time to celebrate light, hope, and togetherness. Invite families to share traditions, decorate with fairy lights, or create simple rangoli art using coloured rice or chalk. It's a beautiful way to



Emily Caska
Chief Executive Officer
Playgroup NSW

honour cultural diversity and build community.

Children's Week: Celebrating Every Child

Children's Week (19–27 October) is all about recognising the rights of children to play, rest, and be heard. This year's theme encourages us to create spaces where children feel safe, valued, and free to express themselves. Consider planning a child-led activity, a group mural, or a celebration of children's voices through storytelling or song.

Thank you for the warmth, creativity, and care you bring to your playgroup. Let's make October a month of joyful memories!

GOOD NEWS STORY

Since 2023, I have had the pleasure of facilitating quarterly Pop-up Playgroups in partnership with Professor Susan Hespos from MARCS BabyLab. MARCS BabyLab, part of the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development, conducts world-class interdisciplinary research. Most sessions have been held in the beautiful setting of Western Sydney University Westmead and are primarily aimed at families with children aged 0–12 months. The Playgroup sessions are open-ended and informal, giving families the chance to meet one another and speak with Professor Hespos in a relaxed environment about any developmental questions they may have. I also take each session as a wonderful opportunity to run a mini Playgroup, showcasing the fun of Playgroup with activities such as a lively



round of parachute play - an essential favourite that makes Playgroup complete.

- Melanie O'Grady, Community Coordinator for Community Playgroups

CHILD SAFETY UPDATE

We have heard from our community about the distress and concern that has been experienced following the reported incidents of child abuse in early childhood settings over the last few months.

At Playgroup NSW, keeping children safe is our highest priority. We're working hard to continuously improve and strengthen our approach to child safety and protection across all playgroups. This means making sure our policies, practices and training are clear, consistent and easy to follow.

We're currently updating our child safety guidelines and resources to reflect best practice and ensure they're practical for volunteers and community playgroups. We're also working on improvements about how we support you as playgroup leaders through clearer information, more accessible resources and opportunities to ask questions or raise concerns.

We'll be seeking to collaborate closely with you to get your feedback. Your insights and experiences are vital in helping us build safe, welcoming environments for children and families.

[Read about Playgroup NSW's Statement of Commitment to Child Rights and Safety](#)

FATHER'S DAY FUN



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **1st October - 31st October**
 - Dyslexia Awareness Month
- **1st October**
 - International Coffee Day
 - International Music Day
 - World Vegetarian Day
- **2nd October**
 - Word Farm Animal Day
 - World Game Day
- **3rd October**
 - World Smile Day

- **4th October - 10th October**
 - World Space Week
- **4th October**
 - National Taco Day
 - World Smile Day
 - World Animal Day
- **5th October**
 - World Teachers Day
- **7th October**
 - World Habitat Day
 - World Cotton Day
- **9th October**
 - World Post Day
 - World Space Week
 - World Sight Day
- **10th October**
 - World Mental Health Day
- **11th October**
 - World Egg Day
 - International Day Of The Girl Child
- **12th October**
 - World Kite Day
 - Diver's Day
- **12th- 18th October**
 - National Nutrition Week
- **14th - 20th October**
 - Aussie Bird Count

- National Bird Week
- **15th October**
 - National Mushroom Day
 - Global Handwashing Day
- **16th October**
 - World Bread Day
 - World Food Day
- **17th October**
 - Loud Shirt Day
- **20th October - 26th October**
 - National Children's Week. Check out [these posters](#) to share!
 - National Water Week
- **21st October**
 - Diwali
- **22nd October**
 - Children's Day
 - Wombat Day
- **24th October**
 - World Kangaroo Day
- **25th October**
 - World Pasta Day
- **26th October**
 - National Grandparents' Day
- **28th October**
 - International Animation Day
- **31st October**
 - Halloween

- Day for Daniel
- Teacher's Day

'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](#)

CHILD SAFETY AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF FAMILIES PRESENTS AN ON DEMAND WEBINAR

How a 'village' approach can support infant and toddler mental health

Supporting infant and child mental health can be both extremely rewarding and challenging for practitioners working with families. This webinar discusses how to work collaboratively with families to engage with their 'village' of family members, friends and trusted community members, to positively influence infant and toddler mental health.

[Register here](#)

FIRST AID TRAINING

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!

[Download Our Latest Activity Sheet!](#)

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



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