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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

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- Start the Year String With Your Playgroup! We're so excited to open the doors for our 2026 playgroup season and to see both familiar faces and new families joining our community.
- National Playgroup Week 2026 Playgroup is a special place - a space where children explore the world at their own pace, build confidence through play, and form their earliest friendships. It's also a place for parents and caregivers to connect, share experiences, and feel supported. Whether you're here for the first time or returning after many years, you're an important part of what makes our playgroup vibrant and welcoming.
- Important Updates
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- Activity Spotlight Thank you for being part of our playgroup family. We can't wait to share a joyful, creative, and memorable year with you!
- Snack of the Month
- Parent Corner



Emily Caska

Chief Executive Officer

Playgroup NSW

START THE YEAR STRONG WITH YOUR PLAYGROUP!

The new year is a great time to ensure your playgroup runs smoothly and feels welcoming-especially with new families joining. Here's how to make a great start:

Top Tips for Playgroups

1. Committee Updates

- If your volunteer committee has changed, please update Playgroup NSW via the [AGM and Committee Members Form](#).

2. Welcome New Families

- Respond quickly to emails and Facebook queries.
- Share a welcome pack with location, times, costs, transport, what to bring, communication channels, and Playgroup NSW membership info.
- Greet families personally, provide name tags, and follow up after their first visit.
- Make your playgroup easy to find with clear signage and instructions.

3. Membership

- All attendees must be Playgroup NSW members for insurance and benefits. Membership is **FREE** at playgroupnsw.org.au

4. Refresh Your Playgroup

- Consider changes like session times, fees, morning tea arrangements, routines, or volunteer rosters.

5. Build a Helping Culture

- Encourage everyone to help with setup and pack-up to share the workload.

6. Need Support?

- Contact Playgroup NSW with any questions.

NATIONAL PLAYGROUP WEEK 16TH - 22ND MARCH 2026

National Playgroup Week is a chance to shine a light on something we know makes a real difference: the power of playgroups to support all children, in all families, in all communities to thrive in their first 2,000 days.

This year's theme, **Play for All**, highlights the importance of creating welcoming, inclusive spaces where every family feels they belong. Playgroups are not just about play; they're about connection, learning, confidence-building, and community resilience.

Join us in marking this special week with a playful, joy-filled lineup of events and activities. We're kicking things off with a celebration at New South Wales Parliament, where a panel of celebrity dads will share stories, laughs, and



insights about the power of play. And that's just the beginning!

We're also rolling out a heap of new resources, family-friendly webinars, and advocacy initiatives designed to champion Play for All in every corner of NSW.

Keep an eye out for all our National Playgroup Week happenings — there's plenty of fun, community, and play magic coming your way!

IMPORTANT UPDATES

The Office of the Children's Guardian is currently reviewing the Working with Children Check requirements, and we will be actively involved in this process by submitting our recommendations for consideration. We remain committed to ensuring that Playgroups keep child safety at the forefront as we move into the new year.

VOLUNTEER RESOURCE HUB

We're so excited to announce the development of our new **Volunteer Resource Hub!** This will be your go-to place for everything you need to **start, run, and support** the operation of your playgroup.

We already have a range of helpful resources available for you to explore, and over the coming months we'll continue adding more information to set you up for success.

We'd love your feedback—your insights will help us make sure the hub includes everything you need. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

[Visit the Resource Hub](#)

INCIDENTS UPDATE

Playgroup NSW has introduced an updated Incident Management Policy that applies to all staff and volunteers.

The policy helps ensure incidents involving children, families, volunteers, property, or data are identified, managed, and reported appropriately to keep everyone safe. Incidents are categorised into three levels (minor, significant, and serious), with clear guidance on what actions to take and who to notify.

[View the Form Here](#)

Volunteers should always inform PGNSW as soon as possible and complete a Volunteer Incident Report Form within the required timeframe. Recording and reporting incidents helps us reduce risks and prevent issues from happening again.

[Read the Policy Here](#)

If you're ever unsure whether something is an incident or what to do, please check the Incident Management Policy volunteer cheat sheet or speak with your Community Development officer or reach out to our admin team.

[Access the Cheat Sheet](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PRESS PLAY WEBINAR

Babies understand far more than we often realise – long before they can speak. In this session, Professor Susan Hespos explores the science of early learning and reveals how researchers uncover what children know about the world.

You'll learn:

- How babies show evidence of abstract learning before they can talk
- Why one-size-fits-all parenting advice often misses the mark
- Fun and practical ways to support preschoolers' learning

Webinar details

- Tuesday 10th March
- 1pm - 2.30pm
- Online via Zoom
- For: Educators, Professionals, as well as Parents, Caregivers, Grandparents
- FREE
- This event will be recorded and distributed after the event



Playgroup
NSW
Press Play
WEBINAR SERIES

WHAT BABIES & YOUNG CHILDREN KNOW (& HOW WE KNOW IT!)

WEBINAR

Babies understand far more than we often realise – long before they can speak.

In this session, Professor Susan Hespos explores the science of early learning and reveals how researchers uncover what children know about the world.



with Professor Susan Hespos,
Professor of Infant Studies,
Leader of BabyLab, Director
of Impact and Engagement
MARC's BabyLab

Tuesday, 10 March
1pm - 2.30pm
Online via Zoom
FREE

[REGISTER NOW](#)

KEY WORD SIGN WEBINAR

Join us for an engaging session on Keyword Sign, a simple yet powerful way to support communication and inclusion in early childhood settings.

In this webinar, you'll learn what Keyword Sign is, why it's so valuable for children's language development, and how it can enhance your playgroup experience.

You'll explore common keyword signs and discover practical strategies for incorporating them into your sessions in fun and meaningful ways. Walk away feeling confident and inspired to integrate Keyword Sign into your playgroup activities, helping every child feel heard, understood, and included.

Workshop Details:

- Tuesday, 17th March
- 1pm-1:45pm
- Online via Zoom



FREE EVENT

Key Word Sign Workshop

FREE Playgroup NSW volunteers workshop with Sarina Mahony

Tuesday 17th May
1pm - 11.45pm
Online via Zoom

REGISTER NOW!



[REGISTER NOW](#)

GOOD NEWS STORY

December brought out the festive spirit across our community playgroups as Christmas crafting burst into action statewide, filling sessions with colour, creativity, and plenty of joyful chaos.

From paper-plate masterpieces to sparkling decorations and proudly painted ornaments, children and parents alike embraced the season with imagination and enthusiasm. These simple moments of shared creativity sparked conversations, strengthened friendships, and offered families a chance to slow down and enjoy being together during an otherwise busy time of year.



It was a wonderful reminder of how collective play and creativity bring people together, and a lovely way to close out the year with connection, laughter, and a touch of holiday magic.

ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT

With the weather heating up across the state, this month's activity highlight is all about finding fun, simple ways to stay cool together. We've chosen an activity that's not only cost-effective and easy to set up, but also a big hit with curious little learners. It's the perfect blend of sensory play, creativity and summertime joy — ideal for home, the backyard or your local playgroup.



[Find Out More](#)

As temperatures climb, this is a refreshing way to keep children entertained, encourage hands-on exploration and make the most of those long summer days.

Summer play has never been easier!

SNACK OF THE MONTH

Make the most of mealtime by turning it into a fun and meaningful learning experience! Creating fruity faces is a simple activity that invites children to play, explore and get hands-on with their food.

Not only are these colourful creations adorable, they also help little ones develop fine motor skills, experiment with different shapes, textures and colours, and build confidence trying new fruits.

It's an easy way to bring a little extra joy to the table — and these fruity faces are sure to be an absolute hit with children (and grown-ups too!).



[Find Out More](#)

PARENT CORNER

Play For Our Future: Pre- Budget Submission to the Australian Government 2026

Playgroup NSW is calling on the Australian Government to make targeted, evidence-based investments that strengthen prevention, early intervention, and family wellbeing across the first 2,000 days. Families across NSW are facing growing cost-of-living pressures, mental health challenges, and fragmented access to early supports. Evidence shows that these early years are critical to lifelong outcomes, yet prevention, early intervention, and family capability-building remain under-invested relative to downstream crisis services.

Playgroup NSW provides a statewide, community-embedded platform that integrates playgroups, peer support, parent capacity building, and peak body coordination to deliver scalable prevention and early intervention outcomes. Embedding playgroups as core social infrastructure enables government to reach families earlier, strengthen protective factors, and improve system efficiency—supporting stronger, healthier communities from the very start of life.



[Read the Submission Here](#)

The early years matter — profoundly. One of our latest Insights Article takes a closer look at why both the first and second 1,000 days each play a distinct and powerful role in shaping a child's development.

It explores how rapid brain growth, nurturing relationships, and the environments children are immersed in all work together to build the foundations for lifelong learning, wellbeing and resilience. From those first bonds formed in infancy to the growing independence of the preschool years, every interaction and experience carries weight.

The piece also highlights the importance of community connection and why having consistent, supportive spaces — like playgroups — can make such a difference. Playgroups provide families with a place to share knowledge, build confidence, foster social development, and feel part of a broader community.

By unpacking the science and the lived experiences of families, the article reinforces why birth to five is such a critical window, and how Playgroup NSW continues to play a vital role in supporting families through every stage of this journey.

About Playgroup NSW:

Playgroup NSW is a not-for-profit organisation that helps connect families and

A graphic for a Playgroup NSW Insights Article. It features a photograph of a woman with dark curly hair smiling and holding a young child in a yellow shirt. The background is a light blue with faint circular patterns. Below the photo is the Playgroup NSW logo, which consists of the word 'Playgroup' in a bold, sans-serif font with 'nsw' in a smaller font below it, and a colorful icon of three stylized figures above the 'o's. Below the logo is a blue rounded rectangle containing the text 'Insights Article' in white. Underneath that is the title 'The First 1,000 Days vs. the Second 1,000 Days' in a bold, dark blue font. Below the title is a short paragraph in a smaller, dark blue font: 'Why both stages matter — and why playgroups are essential across the continuum'. At the bottom of the graphic is the author's name, 'Emily Caska - CEO Playgroup NSW', in a small, dark blue font.

Playgroup
nsw

Insights Article

The First 1,000 Days vs. the Second 1,000 Days

Why both stages matter — and why playgroups are essential across the continuum

Emily Caska - CEO Playgroup NSW

[Read the Insights Article Here](#)

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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