



Section Ten COMMITTEES

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Forming a Committee

A playgroup committee is a group of parents/caregivers appointed to manage the playgroup.

They volunteer their time and expertise and should be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Generally, a single session playgroup does not require a formal committee. Individuals may take on positions of coordinator, treasurer, Playgroup SA contact person and purchasing officer. Formal meetings are not necessary because decisions can be made at playgroup.

When a playgroup runs more than one session, or if the playgroup is incorporated, a committee is necessary.

Forming a new committee

When setting up a committee be clear about:

- its function
- powers
- what decisions it can make regarding the running of each session
- which policies are necessary
- how each member can be heard
- how decisions are communicated back to members.

The committee will usually consist of a president, secretary, treasurer and a representative from each playgroup session. Other positions may include vice-president, enrolment officer, Playgroup SA contact person, fundraising secretary, public officer, purchasing officer and publicity officer. A public officer is required for Incorporation.

You may not need to fill all of these positions. Some positions can be combined. Choose only the positions that will best serve your playgroup.

Recruiting committee members

Recruiting playgroup committee members is often difficult. Playgroup families lead busy lives, often combining part time work, establishing a home and child raising, and may not have time to be on a committee.

Recruiting tips:

- Have a clear job description for each position.
- Actively recruit throughout the year.
- Ask each committee member to actively recruit their replacement.
- Talk to prospective committee members about committee roles and responsibilities.
- Approach parents or caregivers who are capable of fulfilling the role or are suited to the role.
- Invite prospective members to attend a committee meeting.
- Have a nomination system in place; many people are too shy to put their own name forward.
- Make it mandatory that each session has one representative on the committee, no representative, no session.
- If people can't commit for an entire year, consider shorter periods on a roster system.

Become a team people want to join

- Respect and support each other; share the workload evenly.
- Don't let any position become so big that no one wants to take it over.
- Don't try to do too much, only take on what is reasonable and achievable.
- Show you value each person's contribution with a thank you certificate, flowers or small gift when appropriate.
- Have fun; try an end of year committee night out to reward yourselves!

T-together
E-everyone
A-achieves
M-more

Committee Positions

Roles and responsibilities

President

- Spokesperson and motivator for the playgroup
- Chairperson for all committee meetings
- Acts on behalf of all playgroup sessions
- Often a signatory for cheque book transactions
- Writes annual report for annual general meeting
- Familiar with playgroup constitution and policies
- Develops agenda in partnership with secretary

Vice-president

- Assists and supports the president
- Takes responsibility as delegated by the president

Secretary

- Responsible for documents and records
- Takes minutes at meetings
- Distributes minutes as soon as possible after the meeting
- Sets agenda with the president
- Presents minutes from previous meeting
- Prepares action sheet of task to be completed and by whom.
- Notes all correspondence
- Replies to all correspondence in conjunction with the president
- Notifies all members of meeting times and dates

Treasurer

- Plans and reviews the budget
- Collects and banks all money, including fees and fundraising
- Presents a financial statement of all incoming and outgoing monies to each committee meeting
- Keeps ledgers, bank books, chequebooks and receipt books current
- Arranges an audit for annual general meeting (if needed)

Playgroup session representatives

- Represents views of their playgroup session
- Assists where required
- Feeds back information to their playgroup session
- Maintains confidentiality of all matters discussed
- Attends meetings or sends a representative on their behalf
- Participates in discussions and decision making
- Delegates responsibilities back to members

Public officer

Only needs to be elected at a playgroup's annual general meeting if it is incorporated.

Responsibilities

- Notifies the Registrar of their appointment within 14 days
- Lodges any change of address of the public officer or the registered address of the association with the Consumer and Business Services within 14 days
- Lodges any resolution for change of name within 28 days of the resolution being passed with Consumer and Business Services
- Lodge an Annual Statement by Public Officer, the prescribed fee and other required financial documents with Consumer and Business Services within one month of the Annual General Meeting.
- Lodges any applications for approval of rule changes or changes of the Statement of Purposes with Consumer and Business Services within 28 days
- Produces any books requested by Consumer and Business Services
- Informs Consumer and Business Services of any changes to the constitution
- Notifies Consumer and Business Services of special resolutions relating to wind-up and distribution of the association's assets within 28 days of passing the resolution. A Notice of Special Resolution for Distribution of Assets on Voluntary Winding Up must be lodged with the prescribed fee.

Information on incorporation of an association is available on the Consumer and Business Services SA website at www.cbs.sa.gov.au/wcm/associations-and-charities/incorporated-associations/

Committee Positions

Membership officer

- Needs voicemail access, an answering machine or mobile phone
- Keeps a secure list of all families attending playgroup sessions
- Maintains names and phone numbers of families on waiting lists and manages waiting list(s)
- Assigns families to the most appropriate session
- Ensures enrolment forms are completed
- Recommends when new sessions need to commenced
- Is the phone contact, and therefore the first contact for new families who want to enrol
- May also be the contact person for Playgroup SA
- Ensures new families are warmly welcomed and have enough information about the playgroup
- Is the contact name appearing on print and online municipal playgroup directories

Purchasing officer

- Purchases all day to day requirements (tea, coffee, milk)
- Purchases art/craft supplies and other equipment
- Ensures there are enough supplies for all playgroup sessions
- Develops a system for playgroup sessions to request equipment
- Works to a budget and/or purchasing policy
- Keeps all catalogues, available discounts and a record of purchases
- Maintains the equipment inventory

Maintenance officer

- Coordinates working bees
- Oversees maintenance of all equipment and storage areas

Publicity officer

- Promotes and advertises playgroup to ensure continued membership
- Encourages activities during National Playgroup Week

Fundraising officer

- Coordinates the fundraising working party
- Is the contact person for any Playgroup SA fundraising initiatives and/or competitions
- Suggests and recommends fundraising ventures to the committee
- With the treasurer recommends fundraising targets to the committee
- Presents a report to the committee meeting after each fundraising event

Playgroup SA contact person

This is an essential committee position and needs to work closely with, or also occupy, the enrolment officer position.

Effective Committee Meetings

Planning meetings

Playgroup members are volunteers and their time and energy is too valuable to waste on unnecessary meetings.

Decide on the frequency, time, place and length of meetings to suit committee members. Your constitution states how many meetings are necessary.

All members need to leave a meeting feeling they have contributed, clearly understood the decisions made and are committed to completing tasks they have been delegated.

Meetings are held to:

- share information
- raise issues
- set up systems
- plan events, programs
- make decisions
- resolve conflict
- address problems
- support all playgroup sessions
- develop and evaluate policies
- build team, motivate people
- share responsibilities
- hear views
- monitor finances
- share workload
- gain consensus

President's role

- Responsible for the agenda
- Chairperson or delegates this responsibility
- Starts meeting on time
- Welcomes and introduces visitors
- Keeps meeting running smoothly
- Encourages everyone to follow the agenda and keeps discussion relevant to the agenda item being discussed
- Participates but does not dominate
- Summarises and clarifies each decision as to who will carry out the action and in what time-frame
- Acknowledges and shows appreciation for all work completed

Secretary's role

- Sets and distributes agenda in consultation with the president
- Brings minute book and takes minutes
- Lists all correspondence on the agenda
- Reads important letters to the committee when requested
- Responds to correspondence as directed by the meeting
- Ensures minute book is kept for seven years, along with electronic records

Executive

This is a small group that usually consists of the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer who may be given the power to make decisions on urgent matters that arise between meetings. Misuse of executive meetings to make other than urgent decisions will cause divisions within the committee. Only use executive meetings for pressing situations.

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of committee members required to attend for decisions to be passed and the meeting to proceed. It is usually set in your playgroup constitution and is often half committee members plus one. No quorum - no meeting.

Ten features of effective committee meetings

1. Notice of meeting and agenda out early
2. Room set up early
3. Members warmly welcomed
4. Extra agendas available
5. Open and friendly discussion
6. Chairperson keeps meeting running smoothly
7. Everyone's contribution heard and valued
8. Decisions made, responsibilities delegated
9. Time for supper and a chat
10. Wider playgroup community informed of decisions

Meetings/Agendas

Ten meeting destroyers

1. Members come unprepared without agendas
2. Disorganised and starts late
3. Ideas are criticised
4. People get angry, fights erupt, gossip is allowed
5. People interrupt and dominate with strong opinions
6. People feel intimidated and too uncomfortable to contribute
7. New members and guests are ignored
8. One agenda item takes up most of the meeting time
9. Meeting goes very late; some have to leave before the meeting is finished
10. People leave feeling frustrated

Ten tips for the effective chairperson

1. Be an arbitrator, not a dictator
2. Plan well for the meeting and have information on all agenda items available
3. Start and end on time; keep the meeting to 1-1½ hours
4. Welcome new members, encourage everyone to participate
5. Keep to the agenda, allowing reasonable time for each item
6. Acknowledge everyone's input in a non-judgemental way
7. Remain open-minded; get the general feeling of the meeting
8. Keep discussion to the point, sum up and draw each agenda item to a conclusion
9. Encourage complaints to come packaged with a solution
10. Be positive; look for solutions and work together to achieve them. Enforce ground rules when necessary.

Work through conflict resolution strategies if you run into difficulty or call the Playgroup SA FREE CALL 1800 171 882.

Agenda

- A numbered list of things to be done/discussed
- Includes unresolved or continuing issues from the previous minutes
- Includes new issues with additional background papers
- Prioritise those issues which are simple to resolve
- Usually set by the president and secretary
- Gives all details of the meeting, i.e. the chairperson, date, time, place
- Allows all members to contribute
- Distributed well before meeting
- Allows all members the opportunity to prepare for the meeting
- Followed step-by-step at the meeting

Sample agenda

Agenda of Tiny Tots Playgroup

Playgroup SA Head Office
91 Prospect Road, Prospect

Thursday 11 February 2014 at 7.30pm

Chairperson:

1. Welcome
2. Present and apologies
3. Minutes from previous meeting
Confirmed and seconded
4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence
6. Reports
 - 6.1. President's report
 - 6.2. Treasurer's report
 - 6.3. Fundraising report
7. General business

Next meeting

Date, time, venue

Agenda items to (name) _____

By (date) _____

Taking Minutes

Minutes

- Official permanent record of a meeting
- Follows the agenda's format
- Signed by the president
- Kept in a bound minute book that cannot have pages removed or kept in a secure electronic file
- Taken by the secretary and distributed to all committee members
- Accurate, concise account of decisions made
- Ratified at the next meeting
- Have an action beside each task and the name of the person taking responsibility for the action

Sample minutes

Agenda of Tiny Tots Playgroup Committee

Playgroup SA Head Office
91 Prospect Road, Prospect

Thursday 11 February 2014 at 7.30pm

Chairperson: J. Jones

1. Welcome
J. Jones welcomed all present
2. Present
J. Smith, B. Choong, L. Black, T. Smith, S. Bertranelli, B. Lang, J. Jones

Apologies
W. Wong
3. Minutes from previous meeting
Moved: B. Choong, Seconded: L. Black
4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence
 - 5.1. Letter from Playgroup Victoria
Action: Jan to place on noticeboard
 - 5.2. Reply from Safeway
Safeway is willing to donate 10 loaves.
Action: Brenda Choong to pick up on Friday, 12 March.
6. Reports
 - 6.1. President's report (Attached)

6.2. Treasurer's report (Attached)
Accounts presented for payment

Purchase sand for sandpit. Col Smith & Co. approved

Petty cash \$50 approved

President's expenses of \$42.55 approved

6.3. Fundraising report

We need people to volunteer to go on the roster for cake stall on Saturday, 20 March.

Action: All playgroup session reps to find one person to fill in gaps. Advise Jane Smith by 10 March.

7. General business

7.1. Fees

All families will be notified in writing of any outstanding fees, informing them of their responsibility to have all term fees paid by the third week of term. Assistance will be offered to anyone having difficulty.

Action: Secretary and treasurer to advise by 10 March.

7.2. Excursions

All playgroup sessions are asked to organise their term one excursion. A joint excursion for all sessions will be arranged in term two.

Action: Session reps to inform their group and bring suggestions for term two outing to next meeting.

8. Next meeting

3 May, 7.30pm
Jan's house, 56 Black Rd, Prospect,
telephone 9993 9993

9. Agenda items

Agenda items to secretary by 23 April
Value volunteers

It is important that all committee members feel valued and needed. Throughout the year each committee person needs to be assigned tasks for completion and be acknowledged for their time and effort.

Annual General Meetings

An annual general meeting (AGM) is:

- a public meeting where the playgroup committee is accountable for playgroup management for the previous year
- a condition of incorporation
- held according to rules set down in the playgroup's constitution.

Make your annual general meeting an occasion people will want to come to.

The playgroup community needs to be informed of the meeting date, place and business in accordance with constitutional guidelines.

Once an association has held its AGM at the end of its financial year it is required to lodge an Annual Statement by Public Officer with Consumer and Business Services with the prescribed fee and a copy of its financial statements.

The financial statements must include a breakdown of the income and expenditure, listing the assets and their value. Make sure the secretary includes your playgroup's incorporation status and number on all correspondence. Visit www.consumer.vic.gov.au for more information.

Sample AGM agenda

AGENDA

17th Annual General Meeting

Prospect Tiny Tots

12 February 2015

1. Welcome
2. Present and apologies
3. Confirmation of the minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting

Confirmed, moved and seconded
4. Reports
 - 4.1 President
 - 4.2 Secretary
 - 4.3 Treasurer
 - 4.4 Reports from other positions (if any)
5. Adoption of reports
Moved and seconded
6. All positions declared vacant
Independent chairperson takes over the meeting
7. Election of office bearers and general committee
8. Appointment of auditor (if required by your constitutional rules)
9. Welcome to new committee
Vote of thanks to all departing committee members
10. Guest speaker
11. Close of meeting

As soon as possible after the AGM complete a committee information sheet on page 131 and distribute to all members.

Committee Handover

Immediately following your Annual General Meeting (AGM), arrange for the outgoing playgroup committee to meet with the incoming committee to hand over information.

Hand over checklist

- Allow time for outgoing people to hand over relevant written information to their replacement.
- Give a clear job description to the incoming president, secretary, treasurer, public officer, Playgroup SA contact person, enrolment secretary and session coordinators.
- The treasurer needs to be sure all finances are in order. They may consider getting the books audited. This meeting is a good time to arrange for the change of signatories with your bank.
- Incoming people should have the chance to talk about their job and ask questions.
- List names, addresses and phone numbers of everyone on the old and new committee.
- Share an overview of the coming year. This may include Playgroup SA events such as National Playgroup Week and other celebrations relevant to your playgroup and community.
- Celebrate the successes of the year and acknowledge the hard work all volunteers put into your playgroup.
- Set dates for committee meetings for the coming year.

Information to hand over

- General information file
- Playgroup Guide
- Playgroup constitution
- Equipment inventory
- Accident, incident or injury record book
- Playgroup membership information
- All paperwork, if incorporated
- Hall or venue details: key arrangements, contact names and numbers
- Events and outings information
- List of resource people and phone numbers – Playgroup SA, local council, Child and Youth Health Services
- List of equipment suppliers
- Relevant Playgroup SA resources

Incorporation

If your playgroup is incorporated be sure that all of the tasks of a public officer have been completed.

For more help with your changeover call Playgroup SA on 1800 171 882.

Incorporation

About incorporation

Incorporation is the joining of a number of individuals into one legally recognised body, an incorporated association. An unincorporated association exists only as a collection of private individuals personally responsible for the group's activities. These individuals can be personally sued and held responsible for the group's debt.

All playgroups are advised to consider incorporation.

When to incorporate

If your playgroup:

- has several playgroup sessions run by a committee, incorporation provides greater legal protection for group members, particularly for those most involved, the committee or group leaders
- leases or owns premises
- wishes to apply for grants of more than \$5000 (some local governments will only give grants to playgroups that are incorporated)
- enters contracts
- employs staff
- needs to be incorporated as a requirement for using a council venue

Auspicings

Organisations that are already incorporated can auspice your playgroup to become part of their incorporated body. Some playgroups are auspicied by a church or neighbourhood house. Playgroup SA can auspice member playgroups to obtain grants that are only available to incorporated bodies.

Insurance

Incorporation protects a committee against liability but does not remove the need for a playgroup to take out insurance. An incorporated playgroup still has a responsibility to protect its members, volunteers, paid workers and the general public.

Family Membership to Playgroup SA offers insurance that provides valuable protection against potential liabilities of playgroups, committee members, workers and members.

How to incorporate

1. Form a working group
2. Purchase an incorporation kit
3. Choose a name for your association
4. Draft a Statement of Purpose
5. Draw up a set of rules (constitution) for your association
6. Nominate a public officer
7. Determine the registered address of the association.
8. Call a meeting to authorise incorporation
9. Send forms to Consumer and Business Services
10. Receive a Certification of Incorporation from Consumer and Business Services

Incorporation publications

For a guide to incorporation call Consumer and Business Services or visit their website at www.cbs.sa.gov.au

All of the required forms to incorporate are available on this website.

All playgroups intending to incorporate or who are incorporated should have a copy of the Incorporation Act, available from Consumer and Business Services.

This website is a very good source of information to help you navigate the process of incorporating and outlines annual procedures. It includes application forms for incorporation, forms for lodgement of new constitutions, etc.

Constitution or rules of the association

A constitution is a set of rules by which the association (your playgroup) is governed. Your playgroup committee follows the principles in the rules to operate the playgroup.

Monitor your constitution to keep it relevant. The procedure for making changes is set down in your constitution. Changes must be lodged as prescribed in the Incorporation Act and the appropriate fee paid.

Playgroups As Employers

Employing staff

Some playgroups pay someone to do tasks that are usually done voluntarily by parents or caregivers. Playgroup members share costs through increased membership fees or fundraising.

This person may clean, set up, pack away, prepare activities or plan and implement a play program.

Employer's legal responsibilities

If a playgroup employs staff its committee must meet all legal requirements.

For information about different aspects of and managing staff such as legal obligations, occupational health and safety, wages and conditions, awards and agreements, or WorkSafe visit one of the following:

- SafeWork SA
www.safework.sa.gov.au
- Fair Work Australia
www.fairwork.gov.au
- Business SA
www.business-sa.com

Payment of award wages

Playgroups are required to pay an employee the relevant current award rate according to whether they are employed on a casual or permanent part-time basis. Casual rates are higher per hour because only hours worked are paid and there are no annual or sick leave entitlements. Check awards with Fair Work Australia or Business SA to ensure you are paying employees correctly.

WorkSafe

As an employer you must provide a safe and healthy workplace for your staff. For more information call WorkSafe on 1300 365 255 or visit www.safework.sa.gov.au

Payment of income tax

If your employee is likely to receive more than \$18,200 per year they are required to pay income tax. While your playgroup may not be paying this figure, the employee may have more than one job and this has to be taken into consideration.

If this is their only position and they are receiving less than \$100 a week, they must complete a General Taxation Exemption form, which can be obtained from any regional taxation office or by contacting the Australian Tax Office's hotline on 13 28 66.

Employers must:

- on commencement, have employees fill out a tax declaration form including their tax file number
- seek advice regarding superannuation
- give employees an annual group certificate, where applicable, within an ATO prescribed timeframe.

Superannuation

Employers must pay 9.5% superannuation for each employee, into an approved superannuation fund. Statewide Superannuation Trust provides superannuation assistance for playgroups and can be contacted on 1300 651 865.

Employee records

The employer is required to keep records of the employee's days and hours worked and annual leave and sick leave, where applicable.

Playgroups As Employers

Employment process

- Decide what you want the employee to do
- Draw up a position description
- Decide what qualifications or experience you want in an employee (selection criteria)
- Get a copy of the most relevant award
- Advertise the position
- Interview the best three or four applicants
- Contact referees
- Make a careful choice and contact all applicants advising them of your choice
- Send successful applicant an employment agreement letter
- Arrange an induction for the new employee.

Employment agreement letter

- Confirms the appointment
- Welcomes person to the playgroup
- Specifies pay rate
- States commencement date and work hours
- Indicates annual leave and sick leave entitlements
- Establishes a three month probationary period
- Is signed by the president and the employee
- Is kept on file at the playgroup
- An extra copy is given to the employee

It is advised that playgroups seek professional advice regarding which term of employment is relevant and whether contracts are required and produced in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

COMMITTEES

Checklist

Playgroup committees are a team of volunteers. How well is your team doing?

Your playgroup committee has playgroup members responsible for the following duties which are being carried out effectively:

- Set committee meeting dates.
- Discuss matters and make binding decisions for the benefit of all playgroup sessions.
- Negotiate and pay rent.
- Keep a waiting list.
- Start new sessions.
- Liaise with other groups using the centre.
- Organise working bees for play and storage areas.
- Set fees.
- Keep the constitution current.
- Plan and coordinate excursions.
- Keep an inventory of equipment.
- Buy new toys and equipment.
- Ensure all play equipment is well maintained.
- Organise fundraising.
- Set and review playgroup philosophy and policies.
- Manage all matters concerning incorporation.
- Collate enrolments.
- Keep account of all incoming and outgoing mail.
- Arrange the annual general meeting (if incorporated).
- Sign cheques.
- Have the accident and injury book available.
- Ensure that this manual is available to all members.
- Recruit new committee members.
- Bank fundraising money.
- Write the annual report.
- Regularly send membership fees to Playgroup SA.
- Make sure all constitutional requirements are met.
- Check that legal requirements in regard to privacy, confidentiality, fundraising events, food handling and discrimination are met.

Committee meeting checklist

- Read agendas and minutes and come to the meeting prepared and ready to contribute.
- Attend meetings regularly.
- Feedback meeting information to the playgroup session.
- Work together as a team.
- Contribute to the discussion.
- Respect the confidentiality of matters discussed at meetings.
- Photocopy this checklist. Tick items that your playgroup is achieving and cross those that need attention. Encourage the committee to discuss results and voice any suggestions or concerns. Develop future plans and implement them as soon as possible. Revisit this checklist annually.