



Section Six EXCHANGING IDEAS AND SHARING PARENT INFO

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Parenting at Playgroup

Parenting is on the minds of all adults at playgroup. Whether a parent or caregiver, each adult is involved in guiding small children.

Parenting issues at playgroup

Each family brings to the playgroup their own style of parenting shaped by background and beliefs. If you asked each playgroup family to write down the ten most important issues regarding parenting, every family would come up with a totally different list.

Even children from the same parents may need to be treated in different ways. What works for one child doesn't necessarily work for another. Because one family finds success with a particular method doesn't mean they are right and have all the answers. There is no perfect formula for parenting that fits all families.

How then can we possibly get families at playgroup to agree on parenting strategies? The answer is that we don't even need to try. But parenting at playgroup needs to be agreed upon; what is acceptable by the group and what isn't. Most would agree that behaviour by parents that is physically or emotionally hurtful or embarrassing to a child is not acceptable.

Establish a playgroup culture that defines and sets boundaries for adult and child behaviour in the same way as expectations are set for behaviour in a restaurant, theatre, aeroplane or cathedral. These rules revolve around safety and being considerate of others.

Parenting at playgroup involves support, sharing information, patience, consideration, sensitivity and tolerance. Discuss issues as a group and share information with new families joining your playgroup.

Learning from each other

Each parent learns so much by observing other parents. They realise all parents experience frustration, sleepless nights, battles with their toddlers and at times say and do things they regret.

All parents gauge the ages and stages of their child's development by comparing their child with other children of the same age. They learn about the next stage by observing children a little older or a little more advanced.

These observations are normal and helpful. They

become counterproductive when negative remarks, insensitive comments or unwanted advice makes a parent feel like they (or their children) are a failure.

Making early childhood growth and development into a competition is destructive to individuals and the group. Apply the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Ask yourself if you would like to be treated that way if your roles were reversed.

If a child is bullying, biting or demonstrating other unacceptable behaviour, photocopy and pass around the challenging behaviour information featured in this manual and bring the group together to discuss the issues.

Ways to make your playgroup a learning centre

- Visit your Child and Youth Health Centre and ask for brochures and posters to display and distribute at playgroup.
- Read parenting articles in ePlay News, SA Kids/State of Play etc to base discussions around issues raised.
- Contact Playgroup SA to arrange a training session.
- Have encouraging posters on your walls.
- Get some good parenting books for your playgroup library and pass them around.
- Talk at playgroup about good parenting programs on television.
- Encourage parents to attend parenting classes run by council and community health organisations.
- Arrange a parenting talk for your playgroup and invite other playgroups.
- Value each parent's uniqueness. Personalities, temperament and current circumstances affect how they parent.
- If you meet in a neighbourhood house, council building, church or Child and Youth Health Centre that runs parenting classes, encourage playgroup families to attend.

Protocol for Guest Speakers

Guest speakers can provide a wealth of information for your playgroup members and are a drawcard for people from your wider community.

Who to ask

Choose speakers of interest to the people you want to attend. Professional speakers are usually very expensive. Your local fireman, policeman, chemist, or representatives from the Australian Breastfeeding Association, SunSmart or SA Transport Department may offer free speakers.

When to have a speaker

- At your next committee meeting or annual general meeting, this will encourage people to come and the information they share will help and stimulate your members
- When there is a certain topic that a playgroup would like addressed ie guiding children's behaviour, toilet training or play
- When adequate supervision is arranged for the children

Steps for success

Step 1 – Book in advance

Book your speaker well in advance and when making contact, discuss your expectations and the group they will address. Arrange the time, place, topic, time allocated for the talk and negotiate payment.

Step 2 – Confirm in writing

Follow up with a letter or email detailing all decisions made in the first conversation. Ask the speaker to send details about themselves for advertising and to help with their introduction. Be clear about the audience, their needs and expectations and why you have chosen this speaker.

Step 3 – Advertise

If the talk is during the day, arrange adequate childcare/creche facilities for the children of parents attending if it's not suitable for children to be present.

Advertise widely and keep all interested people informed. Have an RSVP date so you have an idea of numbers attending. Plan the program to ensure that the speaker is allocated enough time.

Step 4 – Remind the speaker

Confirm all arrangements with the speaker a few days prior to the event. Check the date, time of the talk and when they will arrive. Clarify which equipment is needed such as whiteboard, markers, overhead projector, screen, laptop or DVD player. Confirm the preferred seating arrangements and where they are listed on the program.

Step 5 – Be prepared

Open early. Prepare the room before the speaker arrives. Greet and welcome the speaker on arrival. Show them where they will be speaking and where they will be seated. Ask if there are any required changes or if they have any extra needs, such as a drink of water.

Step 6 – Introductions

Introduce the speaker to the audience and the audience to the speaker. When this is done well, an immediate rapport is established between speaker and audience.

Include 'Welcome to Country' in your introduction. This can be done by everyone, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, to pay respect to the fact that one is on Aboriginal land.

Suggestions on what to include in your 'Welcome to Country' can be found here:

www.dpc.sa.gov.au/welcome-country

Keep to your program and don't cut the speaker's time short by running overtime on other items.

Step 7 – Thank you and follow up

After the talk, thank the speaker. Include any payment owing with a thank you note and give it to the speaker on the night.

Offer refreshments to the speaker if they are available. If the speaker has equipment, offer to help carry it to their car.

A follow up note of thanks giving the speaker some feedback is always appreciated.

Follow similar steps when inviting a local identity such as your mayor or councillors to visit your playgroup.

Challenging Behaviour

The typical challenging child is likely to be boisterous, demanding, noisy, aggressive, and even hurtful to others. The child may even be yours.

The presence of such a child can upset the harmony, activity and enjoyment of your playgroup session. To understand and deal effectively with the disruption, it is important to recognise that the child is not the problem. What the child does is the problem.

This behaviour is likely to be short term but even if it is not, there are some effective ways of dealing with it in a group setting.

Parents should be aware that while we are responsible for our children and we nurture, teach and guide them, we do not own their behaviour. If we make this distinction, we are more able to deal effectively with their challenging behaviour.

As parents, we accept that children develop at different rates. Even siblings will reach milestones – sitting up, walking and talking at different ages. We accept these individual differences and become concerned only if there is a significant delay in achieving them.

Physical development is tangible; we can see and measure it. If a child catches a cold or the measles, we know he has been exposed to a virus, unavoidable contact or unseen circumstance but if a child develops an emotional or social difficulty, we often label the child a problem and the parents ineffective or inadequate.

When young children feel hurt, frustrated, threatened or confused, they are often ill-equipped to deal effectively with their emotions. Poor or non-existent verbal skills, in particular, increase frustration. Trying out new behaviour is one way that children learn. The response they get from parents, other adults and older siblings helps them to determine their future behaviour and how they feel about themselves.

It is possible to reinforce or reduce inappropriate behaviour.

Things to consider

The child

Don't assume the child with challenging behaviour is a product of poor parenting. The child's physical, emotional, social development and relationship with the environment are contributing factors:

- The family might be dealing with some exceptional event such as the birth of a baby, loss of a job or financial pressure which is affecting the child.
- There might be a physical problem, possibly undetected, such as poor hearing or allergies, resulting in frustration or changes in the child's behaviour.
- The child may be physically big and not be used to smaller/younger children or the child may not have yet learnt to adjust his actions and strength.
- Environment, poor sleep the night before, too many people in attendance for the child to cope with and other circumstances may be contributing factors.
- Not all children who enter playgroup are equipped to handle what confronts them.

Your playgroup

- It might be too big or too busy for a child who has had limited social interaction with peers and this may cause anxiety, resulting in aggressive behaviour.
- It might not provide enough stimulation, supervision or activities as outlets for physical energy.
- There may not be enough space for the numbers attending – consider introducing an additional session or better use of outdoor facilities.
- Supervision might not be adequate.

The parent/caregiver

- Be responsible for your child at all times.
- Don't ignore your child's poor behaviour.
- Try not to feel guilty or embarrassed.
- Communicate with your friends at playgroup.
- Identify and act on the important issues such as other children's safety and wellbeing.

Challenging Behaviour

Have reasonable expectations

- Don't expect perfection, allow your child to express himself without endangering others.
- Don't withdraw from playgroup and isolate yourself as the problem might reappear.
- Remember that our children are individuals who do not reflect our worth.
- If your playgroup time has become a nightmare – consider having your child minded every second week for a while; playgroup is for parents too – enjoy the break.
- Recognise the importance of male children developing their gentler side.

Playgroup members

- Ensure the child's parent/caregiver feels welcome, accepted and valued.
- Ensure the child is not victimised for their behaviour.
- Help the parent/caregiver with younger children, so they can have closer parental interaction with their older child for part of the playgroup session.
- Anticipating trouble before it happens requires keen supervision, but is worth the effort.
- Shadow the child with a parent or support group member and intervene just before an outburst or action.
- Get down to the child's level, use their name and establish eye contact.
- With a firm voice say, "Doing that will hurt her, you need to stop" or, "Shouting like that is too loud for inside, let's go outside".
- Direct the child to activities that will provide outlets for energy.
- Praise the desired behaviour loudly when shown by other children.
- Tell the child when he is doing the right thing and allow others to hear this.
- Pick your battles; some minor misdemeanours are best ignored, focus on acceptable behaviours.

If playgroup members can confront the child gently, firmly and consistently, the boundaries of acceptable behaviour will become clearer. If we physically punish or yell, we convey the message that doing this is okay if you're bigger.

Activities for emotional release

- Water and sand play
- All painting activities
- Physically active play
- Running outside
- Swinging
- Blowing bubbles
- Pummelling playdough
- Moulding clay
- Hammering activities suitable for the child's age and stage of development; educational and equipment catalogues will have several examples
- Kicking a ball outside
- Punching a cushion or punching balloon
- Spending time in quiet spaces provided to recover self control and regain composure

Remember

Don't label the child as a problem or bad. It's hard to shake off such tags.

Saying a child is naughty is not helpful. Children can be impulsive, curious, interested or forgetful and in the process do things that adults consider naughty.

Never take over the discipline of the child without the parents' permission.

Support for parents experiencing challenging behaviour:

- Parentline on 13 22 89 - 24 hours support available or visit www.parentline.vic.gov.au
- Your local council for details of parent effectiveness programs
- Respite/occasional care if the child is causing you stress at home
- Counselling or support groups in your local community
- Playgroup SA's FREE CALL 1800 171 882
- Your local Child and Youth Health nurse
- Peer support: introduce friends (one or two at a time) into the child's home for short play sessions. The non-threatening environment of the home may help enhance the child's social skills. Ensure that you respect the child's right not to share his special toys and encourage their use when visitors have gone.

Psychologists and sociologists tell us that many factors influence behaviour. These include how we were parented when we were young, the stresses of our life circumstances and how we feel about ourselves.

Challenging Behaviour

Children's behaviour is also shaped by their stage of physical, social and emotional development, what adults expect of them (too much or too little) and any additional difficulties they experience, such as disability, allergies or their place in the family ie eldest, youngest, middle, only child or a new baby in the family.

"All ingredients in a family that count are changeable and correctable - individual self worth, communication, systems and rules - at any period of time." (Satir, V, 1972).

All behaviour is a communication. What is the behaviour telling you?

Biting

No single behaviour causes more problems at playgroup than biting.

Take it seriously, whether a nip or a bite. Show strong disapproval. Avoid laughing at or ignoring any biting incident, as both will encourage this unacceptable behaviour to continue. Biting usually occurs with toddlers but can also happen with babies.

Why babies may bite

- They are hungry
- They are experiencing teething discomfort
- As an exuberant greeting
- When someone invades their space
- As a sensory experience or exploration
- As a game
- From frustration
- Out of natural curiosity

This behaviour is not premeditated or a vicious attack but spontaneous and unintentional. However, this is of little comfort to the child or adult who has been bitten.

Before a biting incident occurs at your playgroup consider what action is appropriate for both the biter and the child who is bitten. Make it a discussion topic for parents and caregivers by suggesting a hypothetical case study. Brainstorm ideas and come up with something in writing to add to your policy statements. Make sure all families know the actions to take. Once an incident has occurred, very strong emotions are involved and it is difficult to come to an objective, rational solution.

One course of action could be that when a biting incident occurs at playgroup the closest adult separates the children. Both parents are then required to deal with the situation separately. The child who has been bitten needs to be comforted and reassured. The parent of the baby who bites needs to show disapproval of the behaviour, sternly saying, "biting hurts; we don't bite people".

Distract babies with other activities. Provide food or a teething ring for the baby to chew if hunger or teething is the cause. It is not wise to play games with babies such as nibbling toes or biting ears as this may encourage a baby to think of biting as a game.

Why toddlers may bite

- Frustration from lack of language and negotiation skills
- To get a spectacular reaction (even if it is negative)
- To release anger or built-up emotion
- To be in control or exert power
- They are feeling overwhelmed, overcrowded and unable to cope at playgroup
- Another child has challenged them over a special toy
- If the playgroup room is too noisy, overstimulating or causing over-excitement
- If they are bored and lacking play experiences that are of interest to them
- To copy the behaviour of another child
- They are defending their perceived territory

The toddler stage is predominantly the biting stage. Intervention is essential; children can't be left to resolve the issue themselves. Often the bitten child is smaller and unable to assert his/her rights verbally.

Separate the children. The parent can comfort the bitten child, being aware that their child may have initiated the action by snatching a toy or being aggressive.

The parent of the child who has bitten needs to be at eye level with the child and give a strong, firm explanation that biting hurts and is not acceptable. On occasions a parent may appreciate someone else speaking to their child but this must be their choice. As children gain more reasoning and language skills, discuss more appropriate ways for them to negotiate solutions.

Acknowledge the anger or frustration the child may be experiencing and suggest some alternative activities like swinging, digging or outdoor physical play to release their strong emotions.

If blood is drawn in a biting incident, contact your family doctor or local general practitioner.

Try not to make the child who bites the centre of attention. If a child is sufficiently rewarded with a group reaction they may be inclined to repeat the performance. Talk as a group about what may have caused the incident and look for ways to prevent a further incident. Firm disapproval and looking to the removal of frustrations and triggers is the most effective way to manage this behaviour.

Biting

In extreme cases

Biting can tear a playgroup apart. The most common cause for dissension is when the parent of the child who bites ignores or refuses to adequately handle the situation. They may blame other children for annoying their child or they may be embarrassed and frustrated, not knowing what to do. Recognise their feelings and their need for acceptance/support.

Biting is a very emotive situation. Try to remain calm and objective. If you have a child over three who bites or if a child is regularly biting, call the group together to discuss how you can support the parents/caregivers involved.

Identify what sets off the biting incidents and how to avoid them. Is it a particular toy or piece of equipment? Is supervision adequate? Do incidents occur at certain times during the session? Is the child bored or overstimulated? Is a particular child the target?

Once the triggers have been identified work through preventing further incidents.

Arrange with the group to shadow the child. This is close supervision without hovering over or stifling the child. Intervene quickly to prevent biting incidents.

Biting is a very common, challenging behaviour and help is available. Support the family by suggesting they get further assistance and share this information with everyone at playgroup by collecting enough brochures or photocopy other written materials for each family.

Should you need additional support or advice, contact Playgroup SA.

Who families can contact

- Local maternal and child health nurse
- Family doctor
- Parentline 24 hour service on 13 22 89
- Local library for books on childcare and biting

Situations to avoid

- Don't label the child as 'the biter', 'naughty', 'horrible' or other names.
- Don't ostracise the child, include him/her in play activities.
- Avoid discussing the issue in front of the child or even on the phone while the child is within hearing distance.

- Don't blame the parent; be aware that your child may go through this stage.
- Don't ignore the child who bites and hope it will just stop.
- Don't bite the child back as this gives them the message that 'big people can bite little people to get their own way'.
- Don't humiliate the child; it's the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child.

Think positive

- Verbally encourage the child when their behaviour is acceptable.
- Assist other children to be assertive, eg "You can't have this toy, I am playing with it. I will let you have a turn when I am finished". If the child is too young to say this, the parent may need to say it for them.
- Parents can help children by modelling - not always allowing children to take toys from them or giving in to the child just because the child wants something.
- Provide physical activities to allow children to release strong emotions.
- Reduce clutter and noise levels, avoid overcrowding.
- Have more than one of each toy.
- For older children, use a timer or a clock for taking turns if it's a popular toy.

Suggested reading

Practical solutions to practically every problem: The early childhood teacher's manual (revised edition) by Steffan Saifer. Australian edition adapted by Susan Clark, 2005.

Ourselves in Their Shoes, A. Stonehouse, Lady Gowrie Child Centre (revised edition), 1981.

For more reading on challenging behaviour issues contact the Lady Gowrie Resource Centre - 43 Dew St, Thebarton South Australia 5031
Toll Free 1800 129 606
Phone 08 8234 5219
Email resources@gowriesa.org.au

Child Abuse

Child abuse and neglect

- Physical abuse refers to a situation in which a child suffers significant harm from an injury inflicted by his parents or another adult. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child.
- Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity. The person could be either the child's parent or someone from whom the parents have not protected the child.
- Emotional abuse refers to a situation in which the child's parent repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent to the extent that the child's social, intellectual or emotional development is damaged.
- Neglect refers to a situation in which the child's parents fail to provide the child with basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are at risk.

Mandatory reporting

Nurses, doctors, police, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers are legally required to report the physical and sexual abuse of the child. Playgroups are not legally required to report.

Family, friends and neighbours, while not mandated, are the biggest group of notifiers because of their concerns about particular children.

Our responsibility

If you believe a parent is stressed and is at risk of physically or emotionally harming their child, you may want to offer assistance to that person. Assistance could be as simple as acknowledging to the person that parenting is difficult and you would be happy to talk with them about how hard it can be. You may be able to offer practical support such as minding their child, helping with shopping or putting them in contact with a good support group. It is important not be judgemental, as a stressed parent is likely to be well aware that the way they react to their child is not ideal.

Sometimes the concerns you have may appear to be the continual pattern of parenting for that family.

You may be concerned because of the child's behaviour, things the child says to you, things the child says to your child or others, or comments you hear from the parent. It may be that what you observe between the child and their parent is very worrying.

Reporting child abuse

Any members of the community can contact their local child protection office and talk with a child protection worker about their concerns. To report a family, the worker will want to know who you are and as much detail as possible about your concerns, about the child and the child's family.

The protection worker will then decide whether a visit should be made to the child. Protection workers visit approximately half of all families they are notified about. If the worker decides not to visit they may be able to suggest what to do to assist the family. If the worker does decide to visit, the aim is to ensure the child is safe and then to work with the family to ensure the child is not at risk of abuse or neglect. Only a small number of cases are taken to the Children's Court. Protection workers are trained social workers, welfare workers or psychologists and do all they can to support families to care for their children.

If you make a notification the protection worker cannot divulge your identity to the family, so your confidentiality is assured.

If you believe a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, contact the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL)

CARL
Child Abuse Report Line
131 478

www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren/HowToNotify

The Report Line is a centralised point of intake and all child protection concerns are to be reported to this agency.

Referral and Information Services South Australia

After hours Crisis Care

An after hours crisis service provided by qualified Families SA social workers.

Ph: 13 16 11
Mon-Fri: 4:00pm - 9:00am
24 hours on weekends and public holidays.

Parent Helpline

Provides telephone information, counselling and support to parents.

Ph: 1300 364 100

Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone counselling for victims of domestic violence and their concerned friends. Also provides information about services for those affected by domestic violence or who are troubled by their own behaviour.

FREE CALL: 1800 800 098

Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Offers crisis counselling, support and referral to safe accommodation.

Ph: 1300 782 200

Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation Service

Provides support and emergency accommodation for migrant women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

Ph: (08) 8346 9417
Mon-Fri: 8:30am - 5:30pm

Nunga Mi Minar Women and Children's Shelter

Provides support and emergency accommodation for Aboriginal women and children who are victims of domestic violence.
Referral through Domestic Violence Crisis Service.

Ph: 1300 782 200
Mon-Fri: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Referral and Information Services Australia Wide

1800 RESPECT

A national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, young people, and callers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
24 hours, 7 days a week

1800 MYLINE

A national relationships helpline for young Australians to talk to someone about the relationship issues they may be experiencing, or if they are unclear about where to draw the line between what is, or is not, a respectful relationship.

1800 MYLINE (1800 695 463)
24 hours, 7 days a week

Lifeline

A general and crisis telephone counselling, information and referral service, provided by trained volunteers who are supported by professional staff.

Ph: 13 11 14

MensLine Australia

An Australian Government initiative providing telephone counselling and a referral service for men. It is operated by Care Ring (Personal Emergency Services Inc), and is a resource for men who need advice on a large range of issues (eg, relationship support, parenting skills) and for those at risk of committing suicide.

Ph: 1300 789 978

Domestic Violence Helpline

Telephone counselling for victims of domestic violence and their concerned friends. Also provides information about services for those affected by domestic violence or who are troubled by their own behaviour.

FREE CALL: 1800 800 098

Helplines and Telephone Counselling for Children, Young People and Parents

PANDA (Post and Antenatal Depression Association)

Provides confidential information, support and referral to anyone affected by depression and anxiety during pregnancy and after childbirth (perinatal depression and anxiety), including partners, family members and friends.

Ph: 1300 726 306

Mon-Fri: 10:00am - 5:00pm (AEST)

Family Relationship Advice Line

Assists families affected by relationship or separation issues. The Advice Line provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It can also refer callers to local services that can provide assistance.

FREE CALL: 1800 050 321

Mon-Fri: 8:00am - 8:00pm (local time)

Sat: 10:00am - 4:00pm (excl. national public holidays)

Instructions for deaf or speech-impaired callers can be accessed on the website.

Child Wise

National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline

Support service for individuals, organisations, professionals and parents requiring assistance on child protection. A compassionate and professional team of trained counsellors can assist with any enquiry or report relating to child sexual abuse.

FREE CALL: 1800 991 099

Mon-Fri: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Provides breastfeeding information and support to mothers, their support networks (eg, other family members) and health professionals.

FREE CALL: 1800 686 268

Children and the Media:

Let's Talk - Children and Media Helpline

Provides a movie review service for parents and caregivers. Before taking their children to a movie, parents are urged to phone the helpline to check whether that movie is likely to be suitable.

FREE CALL: 1800 700 357

Referral Agencies and Organisations

Asthma Foundation of South Australia

www.asthmasa.org.au
(08) 8238 9300

Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Inc

www.downssa.asn.au
Greenacres (08) 8369 1122
Grange (08) 8346 1056

Helen Mayo House Postnatal Depression

Support and Counselling (24 hours)
(08) 7087 1030

Homebirth Network of SA Inc

admin@homebirthsa.org.au
(08) 8556 3423 or (08) 8339 4074

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

www.humanrights.gov.au
1300 656 419

Kidsafe SA

www.kidsafesa.com.au
(08) 8161 6318

Kids' Help Line Counselling Service

1800 551 800

Legal Services Commission of SA

Child Support Unit

www.lsc.sa.gov.au/child_support_unit.asp
1300 366 424 or (08) 8111 5576

NAPCAN

www.napcan.org.au/SA

Novita Children's Services Inc

(08) 8243 8243

Poisons Information Line

13 11 26

SA Multiple Birth Association Inc

(08) 8364 0433

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support (SANDS SA), including Miscarriage

www.sands.org.au
1300 0 SANDS / 1300 072 637

SIDS and kids

www.sidsandkids.org
1300 308 307

SPARK Resource Centre

www.sparkresourcecentre.org.au
(08) 8212 3255

The Cancer Council of South Australia

www.cancersa.org.au
13 11 20

Women's and Children's Hospital

www.wch.sa.gov.au
(08) 8161 7000

Women's Information Service

www.wis.sa.gov.au
1800 188 158

Checklist

Use this checklist to see how well parents and caregivers are able to support each other by sharing parenting information and exchanging ideas at playgroup.

- A member of your playgroup regularly visits www.playgroup.org.au/sa to check monitor the parenting events and training are being offered.
- No single parenting style is valued above other styles.
- Each parent's parenting style is respected.
- Parents feel free to discuss their parenting style while respecting that other families parenting models.
- Good quality parenting information is available at playgroup (consider a parent library/resource area at playgroup)
- Families are aware of the expectations and limitations of their parenting practices within the playgroup e.g. 'no hurting - no smacking' applies at playgroup.
- Parents are aware of their responsibility to discipline or verbally correct their own child and their limitations regarding other peoples' children.
- Cultural values and beliefs are discussed openly and respectfully.
- The needs of families and children from all backgrounds are taken into consideration.
- Information about parenting classes in the community is available at playgroup.
- Links are kept with the local Child and Youth Health Centre and reminders given regarding key child youth health visits and immunisation days.
- Consideration is given to inviting a speaker to attend your AGM or to a special evening arranged by your playgroup or playgroups in your area.
- Behaviour is seen as a communication and the question is asked, "What is the behaviour telling us?"
- Expectations placed upon children take into account their age and stage of development.
- Frustrations, anger and strong emotions that small children experience are managed in an appropriate and respectful manner.
- 'Challenging behaviour' (provided earlier in Section Six of this manual) has been circulated to all families.
- Playgroup SA's FREE CALL number is utilised for assistance with behaviour issues (1800 171 882).
- Your playgroup respects and supports any family experiencing emotionally challenging times including financial stress, death or serious illness of a family member, separation of parents, birth of additional children or moving out of/into the area.