

State of Play

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF PLAYGROUP SA

ISSUE 3 2014

THE DIRT ON NATURE PLAY

LET'S SING!
FUN WITH
MUSIC

BEATING THE
MUMMY BLUES

FLIP OVER FOR
SA KIDS



Letter from STATE OF PLAY

Hello all, and welcome to another edition of *State of Play*! We love preparing this magazine for you and we hope it inspires you to engage with your 'playgroupers' in exciting ways that you haven't thought of before – both at home and at playgroup.

In this edition we've highlighted some ideas on embracing nature with your little ones, we've outlined the benefits of music and movement with some ideas for music time at playgroup and we've written an article focussing on Post Natal Depression (PND); how playgroup can assist carers suffering from PND, symptoms, support services and strategies.

Playgroup SA's annual event, Playgroup @ The Zoo, is happening on Friday 7 November this year, from 10am to 2pm. This event aims to celebrate playgroup and the thousands of families who enjoy and attend playgroup every week in SA. It's always a great family fun day out and entry

prices are discounted for Playgroup SA Members. As well as zoo attractions, Playgroup @ the Zoo features live children's entertainment, jumping castle, face painting, playgroup activities and more, included in the entry price. Check out the Playgroup SA Facebook page for more information and for the link to purchase tickets.

A reminder to our members that you can call Playgroup SA at any time for further information, advice and support for any playgroup issue. The team here at Playgroup SA love getting out and visiting playgroups in both rural and metro areas. We can provide your playgroup with some craft activities, tailor some of our creative workshops to your playgroup or simply answer your questions. Give us a (free) call on 1800 171 882.

Carley Jones, Executive Officer, Playgroup SA



The DIRT_{on} OUTDOOR PLAY

WORDS RACHAEL STROUD, PLAYGROUP SA PROJECT OFFICER

Children are naturally curious and motivated to learn about their environment and surroundings. They do this by asking questions and talking about their experiences. What better way to explore their world than by being outside enjoying it?

Free and unstructured play outdoors encourages problem solving, social skills and many other forms of development. It's an ideal environment for experiential learning, as it offers unique opportunities to be creative, to move around, and for children to make choices, be loud or quiet.

Outside, kids can explore, take risks, run as fast as they can, jump, climb, shout and sing.

It also provides them with the space and environment to be peaceful, to be still, calm, to lay down and look up at the sky, to enjoy the silence or sounds of nature around them. To make their choice to follow a path that interests them.

As well as providing opportunities for creative play and being resourceful, outdoor play promotes a sense of confidence and wellbeing.

Please contact Playgroup SA if you would like information and support in setting up an outdoor Playgroup or want to know more about outdoor play opportunities for young children on (free call) 1800 171 882.



HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO TAKE YOUR PLAYGROUP INTO THE GREAT OUTDOORS:

Open the doors

Where possible, allow children to move freely between the indoors and outdoors. Find a safe way to keep the doors open to the outside area so the children can make a choice to go outside. That way they can go where their imagination or curiosity takes them.

Get out and about

To freely enjoy the great outdoors, why not arrange a playgroup excursion once a month or term? Meet at parklands or a local park with large open spaces and trees where children can run freely, climb and explore. They'll love having no barriers or obstacles to their play. Have a picnic with fruit and a drink and bring everyone together towards the end of the session. You can still have your story time and song time to finish off the playgroup. Children (including the younger ones) will make the link that it is the same group of friends from playgroup.

Let them dig

Children love digging in the dirt! Provide some tools they can use to dig with. They will use their own creative thinking and problem solving and will find their own objects to bury. So you will know where to look if that crucial piece of Duplo is missing! Leave buckets and a box of digging equipment close to an area where they can dig. Let them investigate and experiment with their tools. And let them get dirty and messy. If space is limited, bring your own child-safe dirt or soil and place in buckets, containers or recycled boxes for them to dig in. Provide all natural resources wherever possible.

Mud pies and mud kitchens

If there's water close by, make mud pies. This is sticky, fun and serious business! Set up an area of wooden shelves, tree stumps and crates to allow children to design their own mud 'kitchen'. Step back and let them take over – it's the perfect opportunity for experiential learning and problem solving.

Get growing

Planting is an all-time favourite playgroup activity in spring.



It's messy, fun, promotes learning about plant growth and foods and is a great task for playgroupers and adults to enjoy together. Plant seedlings in old gum boots and attach them to the playgroup fencing or grounds. Use wooden pallets to create a garden bed (ensure pallets are safely secured if positioned vertically). Ask local gardening businesses if they would like to donate some seeds and soil (suitable for children) to your playgroup. Contact your local Bunnings store and ask them to organise a planting session with you.

Let's explore!

Children love to explore and look for treasure. Let them put together an explorer's kit and venture outside with it. Provide an area with magnifying glasses, compasses, binoculars (or make craft items), hats, clipboards, pencils or crayons. They'll need a bag to put their items in, too.

Maps

Create your own treasure hunt by placing natural objects such as small sticks or rows of rocks along the ground in the shape of an arrow. Bury treasures in the sandpit or garden and set out to collect them.

Log circles

Log seats or circles are beautiful areas for playgroups to sit. Try to place log seating in an undercover area for a cubby house effect.

Outdoor play for babies

Babies love the outdoors too! For babies, being exposed to the outdoors gives them a range of essential sensory experiences and assists in learning of the world around them, promoting healthy development. We suggest a baby area is always set up indoors at playgroup and the same principle applies for outdoor spaces. Provide babies with a safe space by taking the baby mats and gym outside to enjoy.

Outdoor experiences for babies and young toddlers can include:

- Feeling grass, sand and wind on their face.
- Grasping leaves.
- Hearing birds, swaying trees, the wind.
- Looking at the clouds and the sky.
- Laying and crawling on grass.
- Watching wildlife.

A HELPING HAND

WORDS ADAPTED FROM PLAYGROUP WA PND RESOURCE

Playgroup provides a welcoming place and vital support for parents who suffer postnatal depression.

Attending a new Playgroup for the first time can be daunting: as with any new situation, there are nerves and a feeling of self-consciousness.

But for someone suffering postnatal depression, just getting out the door with a baby (and all the associated baby paraphernalia) can feel completely overwhelming, let alone getting to Playgroup.

This is one of the many reasons why being inclusive at your Playgroup is so important.

Every new person who joins a Playgroup has his or her own story and providing a supportive environment at playgroup goes a long way to making things easier.

It's not just mothers of newborns who benefit from the support and social interaction that Playgroup provides. A study published in May this year showed maternal depression was more common four years after the birth of a woman's first child than at any time during the child's first year.

The Murdoch Children's Research Institute study of 1500 mothers found that 10 percent of women reported symptoms of depression a year after the birth of their first child – but this increased to 15 percent four years after the birth.

What is PND?

Postnatal depression (PND) is a mood disorder that occurs in women (and sometimes men) following childbirth. It is a clinical depression, and is the most common psychological complication of childbirth. It most often arises during the first year after giving birth and the onset tends to be gradual and may persist for many months. Postnatal depression affects one in seven women. Left untreated, the impact on the mother and her children can be profound.

PND is often not recognised by women, their partners, family and friends due to their lack of understanding about the illness. For some women, a degree of pretending to cope with motherhood is often present, as they do not understand that they may be suffering from a mental illness and need professional help.



READ ON

Use the free **viewa** app to scan this page and read about PND research.

Symptoms of PND

Each woman's experience of PND is different and not all women will feel the same. Most women with PND will find the severity of their symptoms is fairly constant. The symptoms include:

- More bad feelings than good.
- Feeling exhausted, empty, sad and tearful.
- Feeling overwhelmed by daily tasks.
- Lack of interest or pleasure in usual activities.
- Lack of or increase in level of self care.
- Feeling inadequate and feeling like a failure as a mother and/or partner.
- Feeling guilty, ashamed and worthless.
- Feeling a sense of hopelessness about the future.
- Insomnia, excess sleep and/or nightmares.
- Avoiding contact with family and friends or fear of being alone.
- Withdrawing from social contact.
- Fear for the child(ren) or of the child(ren).
- Fear of harming child(ren) or self.
- Decreased sexual desire.

Support services and strategies

- Ask for help or collect information from health professionals, i.e. child health nurse, GP, obstetrician, counsellor
- Avoid isolation.
- Increase support network.
- Join a PND support group.
- Keep contact numbers handy.
- Get out and meet other mothers with similar age children, eg. playgroup, mothers' group, toy library.
- Educate your partner and supporting family and friends about PND – they are often more willing and able to provide emotional and practical support after an adequate explanation and appropriate guidance is given.
- A combination of antidepressant medication and psychological therapy may be useful in treating moderate to severe depression.

Less severe PND may be helped by regular contact with support groups. Support groups provide understanding, information and support for women, partners and their families affected by pregnancy and childbirth-related stress and depression. To find your local support group, contact your GP, local community centre or council and/or Helen Mayo House, community service organisations such as Anglicare and Uniting Care.

Other strategies may include:

- Maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise.
- Catching up on lost sleep.

- Asking for help with the baby/child or housework.
- Making time for pleasurable and relaxing activities.

How can Playgroup help?

Avoiding isolation is vitally important in the treatment of PND. For many parents, attending Playgroup can be a highlight of each week, yet for a mother with PND the benefits of Playgroup can be even more profound. Making the effort to get there can provide a huge sense of achievement and sharing a coffee and a chat with other parents can provide much-needed respite, particularly when the alternative is being at home faced with seemingly insurmountable housework. Just having somewhere to go and a reason to get out of the house can provide a break from what can seem like living in a fog.

In today's society it can be difficult to admit that we are not coping. Mums in particular feel they need to do it all and be it all (for everyone, all the time). If you attend a Playgroup and know someone who is suffering from PND, or have just noticed another mum who may seem a bit down or a bit overwhelmed, a little bit of support can really make a difference. Make them a cuppa and spend some time to listen without judgement. Depending on how comfortable you feel (and how receptive they are) you might even like to offer to babysit for an afternoon or cook them a meal. Recovery from PND is a gradual process. But little things can make a big difference.

Support and resources

If you are feeling down or anxious you should talk with your midwife, Child and Family Health nurse, GP, obstetrician or another professional involved in the care of you and your baby, toddler or preschooler. They can help make sure you get support and help to feel better. You may also access support via telephone help lines or websites. Some are local to South Australia and some are national. Confidentiality and safety is always respected with the highest importance. ●

• PANDA Postnatal and Antenatal Depression

Association: 1300 726 306, www.panda.org.au

• **Beyond Blue** 1300 224 636, www.beyondblue.org.au

• **Child and Youth Health Parent helpline** 1300 364 100, www.cyh.com

• **Pregnancy birth and baby helpline** 1800 882 436, www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au

• **Lifeline** 13 11 14, www.lifeline.org.au

• **The Black Dog Institute** www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

• **Helen Mayo Institute** 7087 1047

• **Mental Health Triage** 131 465

LET'S SING!

WORDS MELANIE BAKER, PLAYGROUP
SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Share the joy of music for a magic learning experience.

When children listen to music, most find it impossible to sit still. They love to sing, make noise and dance along.

It's a great idea to include a regular music time at Playgroup, to help expose children to different kinds of music and boost their confidence in musical ability.

This can work best at the end of a session, as a way of calming everyone down and creating a happy mood for home time. It's also a great opportunity for the parents and carers to share a happy experience with their child.

Some children will not want to participate; others will be right in the middle of it, singing at the top of their lungs. Lead by example: if you sit and sing next to your child, they will be more likely to join in too.

Remember there is no right way to do things, just experiment with what works best for your Playgroup. Try new things, be supportive of each other and, most importantly, enjoy singing, dancing and doing actions to songs together.

Why music?

- Develops listening skills and imagination.
- Provides opportunities to be creative and lets children express their feelings.
- Develops eye-hand co-ordination and body awareness.
- Develops fine-motor skills using fingers, hands and wrists.
- Develops gross-motor skills using arms and shoulders.
- Develops language and cognitive skills.
- Introduces mathematical concepts.
- Builds self-esteem.
- Can be a way of relaxing and relieving stress.

Music time ideas:

Here are some ideas to help you start a music and movement session. Remember to keep it simple, follow the children's ideas and provide enough space for movement.

- Start with a 'Hello' song.
- Write the words of your favourite songs (action songs work well) on large sheets of cardboard so the new members of your group can follow along.
- Sing along and/or dance to your favourite CD – if you forget the words it doesn't matter.
- Have a special song book.

- Write songs on cards, or keep pictures or items relating to songs in a special box or drawstring bag. Let the children pick out a song to sing. This way you won't be singing the same songs every week.

Song items may include:

- Plastic duck – 'Five Little Ducks'.
- Teapot from a tea-set – 'I'm a Little Teapot'.
- Soft toy frog – 'Galumph went the Little Green Frog'.
- Toy bus – 'Wheels on the Bus'.
- Plastic farm animals – 'Old MacDonald'.
- Doll – 'Miss Polly Had a Dolly'.

Play or make your own musical instruments such as:

Shakers or maracas

Use empty drink containers filled with rice or dried pasta. Brighten them up with glitter, pom-poms and sequins. To avoid choking, avoid small items with a lid or secure lids with glue and tape. Attach streamers and stickers to the outside for decoration.

Drums

Ice-cream containers make great drums. You can simply keep the lids on and use hands to tap on them.

Rhythm sticks

Cut dowelling rods into approximately 15-20cm lengths. You can decorate the ends with streamers.

Bells

Only use large well-made bells. Attach the bells to a piece of elastic looped to form a circle. You can attach the elastic to the children's wrists or ankles. This is a great idea for babies. You can also thread bells onto pipe cleaners, twist the ends together to form a circle and tape where the ends meet to avoid any sharp ends. ●

Other ideas:

- Listen to different types of music.
- Vary songs – fast or slow, soft or loud.
- Listen to soft relaxation music before you leave, or play it in the book corner.
- Create a beat by making your own body music. Try things like tapping, stamping, slapping, finger snapping and clapping.
- Finish with a 'Goodbye' song.

Win your Adelaide Shores stay FREE!

The ultimate family fun weekend



Are you a Playgroup SA Member who is coming to **Playgroup @ the Zoo** on November 7? Plan on staying an extra night to attend the Christmas Pageant?

You could win your stay FREE when you book at Adelaide Shores!

Playgroup SA Members who book a stay at Adelaide Shores Caravan Park or Resort for 2 or more nights for **Playgroup @ the Zoo** will be automatically entered into the draw to win the first 2 nights of their stay for **FREE!**

Terms and conditions apply, see www.adelaideshores.com.au/playgroup.aspx for details! Winners announced 31 October.



To book your stay and enter phone **1800 444 567** or email **resort@adelaideshores.com.au** and quote your Playgroup SA membership number



When you **ignite** the spark of creativity early in life, children go on to do **magnificent** things!



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PLAYGROUP

@ THE



FRIDAY 7TH NOVEMBER, 2014

10AM - 2PM  **FROME ROAD, ADELAIDE**

featuring:

Children's Entertainment
inc. The Amazing Drumming Monkeys
Playgroup Activities and Information
Jumping Castle Face Painters
Zoo Attractions Giveaways
and MORE!



purchase tix

online at Adelaide Zoo website
or at the gate upon presentation of
Playgroup SA Membership Card
\$12.50 per adult (children 5 & under free)
non-members welcome at
normal zoo prices.



PLAYGROUP SA'S ANNUAL PLAYGROUP EVENT

celebrating Playgroup in South Australia

Support

Access to Playgroup SA's Support and Development Officers in person, via email and/or telephone. These workers can provide you with useful resources and materials, Playgroup activities, ideas and more.

Publications



Four editions per year of our state based publication, the 2-in-1 *State of Play / SA Kids Magazine*. Includes practical, local information about raising children, as well as original articles by experienced journalists, childhood professionals and parents. This mag covers all stages from pregnancy to the teenage years and *State of Play* is specifically targeted to families with 0-5 year olds.

AND

ePlayNEWS

Subscription to *ePlayNEWS*, Playgroup SA's state based membership newsletter (if an email address is provided) which is distributed six times per year.

Insurance

Comprehensive public liability & personal accident insurance whilst you and your children are attending an Affiliated Playgroup or Playgroup activity anywhere in rural or metro South Australia.

Playgroup SA Member Benefits

Along with 4,000 other South Australian family members, enjoy these Playgroup SA Membership benefits!

Events

Discounted entry into Playgroup SA events including Playgroup @ the Zoo and free special event Playgroups such as Easter, Christmas and Book Week Playgroups.

FREE tickets to the Pregnancy, Baby & Children's Expo (distributed via playgroups).

ABC Card

A Playgroup Membership Card that is also the Australian Baby Card (valued at \$30) offering you hundreds of discounts online and from numerous South Australian based businesses.



Training

Discounted Playgroup SA workshops including, Messy Play, Physical Play, Christmas craft and more.

Discounted prices on Accredited Training Courses including Senior First Aid and Child Safe Environments.

Membership

FREE upgrade to Full Association Membership; This level of membership entitles you to voting rights at Playgroup SA's Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings and to stand for election on the Board of Management.

AND the right to attend as many Affiliated Playgroups as you wish!