

# State of Play

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF PLAYGROUP SA

ISSUE 1 2015



**BABY  
PLAY**  
TIPS + TRICKS

GREAT  
EASTER  
CRAFT  
IDEAS

DOUBLE  
THE FUN  
COPING  
WITH  
TWO

FLIP OVER FOR  
SA KIDS



# Letter from STATE OF PLAY

**P**laygroup SA would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our families as we start another year at Playgroup. We hope that you all enjoyed the Christmas and New Year holidays and are looking forward to another year of great fun and activities.

And an extra big welcome to all our new Playgroups! If you would like a support visit, please contact Playgroup SA on 1800 171 882. We'll see what exciting new activity we can bring to life at your Playgroup.

Let us know, too, if you haven't yet received your affiliation forms or subsequent affiliation pack.

Everyone here at Playgroup SA is madly getting ready for what will be a busy year ahead. We have new workshops on

offer (with new timeslots), plus all of our usual events and an exciting new family fun event in Mount Gambier for National Playgroup Week (keep your eyes out for this one – The Big Play Day Out, 21 March).

Our Playgroup Support and Development Officers Laura and Mel are already getting out to visit Playgroups, including trips to Naracoorte and Roxby Downs.

Just a quick note to coordinators to check their inboxes for the next Coordinator's News and a letter explaining the changes to the Police clearance process.

We look forward to supporting all our wonderful Playgroups and Playgroup members throughout 2015.

**Carley Jones, Executive Officer, Playgroup SA**



A baby with dark hair, wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt, is lying on its back on a blue and white patterned blanket. The baby is looking up towards the ceiling with a curious expression. Above the baby, several colorful hanging toys are visible. One prominent toy is a green and yellow insect-like figure with large, translucent wings, suspended by thin white strings. To its right, another toy with blue and red wings is partially visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey-blue.

# BABY PLAY

Babies love to play, but they don't need expensive toys – all they need is you!

**Y**our baby's first year will be filled with excitement and challenges as your family adjusts and settles in to new routines.

Changes happen quickly as your baby grows and develops. Recent research shows that your baby's first three years greatly impact brain development and future health and wellbeing. For optimum development, a baby needs loving relationships and a stimulating environment to interact with, to play and to learn.

Babies busily explore and experiment with everything around them. They see, touch, taste, feel and hear to discover new information. As they discover new skills they repeat and practise them until they are mastered.

Parents help by being a playmate and providing a variety of

Lying on his or her back will allow baby to stretch, kick and develop hand skills. Tummy time strengthens back, neck, shoulder and arm muscles and gives an opportunity to develop head control. As your baby grows, interesting things to explore become an important part of floor play. Select a few items and change them regularly. Try soft blocks or balls, activity centres, mobiles, soft toys, rattles, mirrors, an 'A' frame baby gym, bead frames, books, boxes, plastic containers and musical toys.

### KEEP THE BEAT

Sing, chant, hum or whistle simple nursery rhymes like 'Humpty Dumpty'. Add finger movements as you sing 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star', or row along to 'Row, Row, Row

"You are teaching one of the few human beings who will be entirely trusted to you how to laugh, learn and love people. There is nothing more worthwhile that you will ever do." – Steve and Shaaron Biddulph (*Love, Laughter and Parenting*)

safe and developmentally appropriate play experiences. As a parent, you are your baby's first educator.

### GETTING STARTED

A great place to start is by joining a playgroup. Playgroups give parents and caregivers a chance to meet to discuss ideas, challenges and the joy and frustration of parenting. Babies and young children learn through play and playgroups offer a wide variety of experiences for them to explore. Many long-term friendships begin at playgroup. Best of all, playgroups are fun!

### EVERYDAY PLAY

Turn everyday routines into opportunities for your baby to play, learn and build relationships.

- Massage, chat or sing while changing baby's nappy.
- Talk at mealtimes.
- Include baby in family activities.
- Chat and point out things of interest while outside or shopping.
- Have a special song or rhyme for putting baby in the safety capsule/car seat.
- Sing a lullaby at sleep time.
- You don't need expensive toys: offer simple objects from around the home – even containers you would normally throw away.

### TUMMY TIME

Set up a texture-rich play space. Try a blanket on the floor and add a rough towel or satin sheet, lamb's wool rug, commercially made baby mat or a patchwork rug made with different fabrics. Let your baby experience and explore the textures.

your Boat'. Play games like 'Peek-a-Boo' or touching games such as 'Round and Round the Garden'. Your baby will enjoy different styles of music. Add shakers, rattles and musical toys to your toy collection. Encourage your baby to make sounds with safe things from around your home like a spoon and saucepan.

### QUIET TIME

Play is not always busy; it can be restful and soothing. Quiet reflective play is as important to your baby's wellbeing as times of social and physically active play.

By learning to read your baby's cues, you'll know when your company is needed and when baby is content to be alone.

When your baby babbles away happily on waking, lies quietly watching a mobile, looks at a reflection in a cot mirror or cuddles a favourite toy, leave him or her to enjoy this playtime. These are special times that allow babies to set the pace of their own play and develop concentration.

### LET'S TALK

Making and listening to sounds is the beginning of language. Every sound is new to a tiny baby: some will soothe, some will frighten. Let baby hear different sounds by varying the tone of your voice.

To start a conversation with your baby, first make eye contact, then talk. Your baby may mouth a reply or make some sounds. Repeat sounds, babble or talk back, then wait for baby's reply. A conversation is soon underway.

Late in the first year, develop vocabulary by naming familiar objects. Use baby's name often in conversation, songs and storytelling. Share books together. Choose some washable books for your baby to play with alone. ●



# DOUBLE THE FUN

Coping with more than one child can be a challenge, but getting out of the house and sharing the load delivers many benefits.

**WORDS** MEL BAKER, PLAYGROUP SA SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

It's not always easy to get to playgroup on time, remembering everything and leaving the house looking respectable. Even with one child it can be hard, but when you have two, three or more children to get there, it can be a whole lot more challenging – especially when one (or more!) is a newborn.

You might remember those first years of playgroup with your first child, spending time doing things together – crafts, painting, reading a book, song time. Now you find yourself juggling your child, who still wants to do all of these things, with another child who equally needs your attention.

Playgroup can be a great source of support. It gets you out of the house and offers the chance to talk to others with children of a similar age. It provides an upbeat, fun and friendly environment. Life-long friendships have started at playgroup for both adults and children.

Here are some tips to help you manage multiple children at playgroup:

- If playgroup seems a bit long, try attending the first or last part of the session and work your way up to stay for the whole session over a number of weeks.
- Don't feel obligated to attend every week. If it's been a long night, have a week off!
- Ask a grandparent or friend to come along with you for some added support. Alternatively, have them look after one or two of your children at home and take turns which child you take to Playgroup each week so you can have some quality time with each child.
- Get prepared the night before. Organise a snack, a piece fruit, water bottle, hat, change of clothes etc.
- Check if there is pram access or bring a baby carrier or sling for little ones so that you can still assist with your other children.
- Accept help from others who offer it. It is okay to ask for help when needed!
- Let other parents or carers help your child with a painting or craft. This can be hard when you are so used to helping your own child, but they will be proud to show you what they've achieved.
- Don't overdo it or stress yourself out. Do what you can at the time. Some weeks will be easier than others.
- Smile and accept the chaos. Soon they'll be off to school and hopefully you'll look back and treasure these wonderful (sometime challenging!) pre-school years. ●











# COMMON GROUND

Laura McCard reflects on how important it is to create a 'village', not just for our children's sake, but the wider community.

**WORDS** LAURA MCCARD, PLAYGROUP SA TEAM LEADER, SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

In today's busy world, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day rush and forget about the people around us. But our kids have the most to benefit from making connections with others, whether it's at the supermarket, service station, or newsagency.

When I first moved to a remote Australian aboriginal community as a teacher, I was worried about how I would find my place there.

My centre was hugely under-resourced, but I soon realised that we had a world of resources on our doorstep. All we had to do was connect the community with the children and the children with the community.

We invited elders and key people in the community into our space to share stories, dances, culture and knowledge.

We welcomed police officers to come and kick footballs

around with the children and local supermarket workers to talk about healthy foods.

In the space of 12 months, the children's confidence grew, as did their sense of belonging, and I witnessed a stronger connection between people.

I think there are lessons we can all learn from this. There are ways to connect our children with their community, whether it's in the inner city, suburbs, regions or remote areas.

There is a lot that children can learn when we look outside the box and create new learning experiences.

## SHARE THE LOVE

While tragic, the recent Adelaide Hills bushfires brought out the best in people. Donations of food and money came thick and fast. How can your playgroup contribute to its

local community? Families might donate food to a homeless shelter, or their used baby clothes to the local Goodwill. Discuss the topic in group time, along with reading a book about giving.

### GET CREATIVE

Create a mural together at playgroup to hang in the entrance or the play room. Make it personal to each child so that they feel a sense of belonging when they arrive. This is a beautiful, artistic way to welcome people when they visit your space.

### SAY THANKS

Ask playgroup families to bring in old greeting cards. Cut out the pictures to make your own new cards. Whenever you go on an excursion or when you have visitors, use these cards to deliver a thank you message. Try drawing and creating your own pictures to make cards. This will show your appreciation to those who support you in the community.

### BE HEARD

Does your local community have its own radio station? Contact them and see if you can organise an excursion. Have the children sing songs that they sing at playgroup over the

radio. If there's a delay in playing the recording, see if the children can listen to it 'live'. Ask the radio station if they can record the songs and make CDs as a keepsake.

### INVITE VISITORS

Request a visit by a local police officer. Talk to the children about how the police are their friends and explain that they help the community to stay safe.

### GET OUT AND ABOUT

Visit your local fire station. Have the fire fighters explain basic information on fire safety and explore a fire engine.

Schedule a trip to your local library. Have the playgroup children choose a book for mum, dad or a carer to read. Encourage those without library cards to sign up and plan regular trips to promote literacy.

Is there a farm nearby that is happy for your playgroup to visit? Visiting a farm is a great way for children to learn about how to grow plants and/or learn animal names and sounds.

### BE INSPIRED

*Bridie's Boots* by Adelaide author Phil Cummings is a great children's story about giving to the community. ●

## The joy of parenting... discover more

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- Shop and save – discover new products to help you and your child
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### Save the Date:

**Adelaide:** 10–12 April 2015

Sydney: 22–24 May 2015

Brisbane: 19–21 June 2015

Perth: 31 July–2nd August 2015

Melbourne: 16–18 October 2015



Loads of free entertainment including  
**Ben & Holly** live on stage.

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# EASTER AROUND THE WORLD

Easter is a fantastic celebration that children around the world enjoy. Why not base your 2015 Easter Playgroup activity on a tradition from another country?

## CHINA

Thousands of years ago in China, eggs were painted red during spring festivals.

'Happy Easter' in Chinese: *Fu Huo Jie Kuai Le!*

## FRANCE

To celebrate Easter in France, children have a competition where they throw eggs up into the air and catch them. The first child to drop their eggs loses the competition.

'Happy Easter' in French: *Joyeuses Pâques!*

## THE NETHERLANDS

Easter in The Netherlands involves children participating in a 'cracking contest'. Children smack their eggs together and the strongest egg (the one that survives with the least cracks) is the winner. This is called Eiertikken.

'Happy Easter' in Dutch: *Vrolijk Pasen!*

## WALES

Easter in Wales can be heard from miles away. On Easter Sunday, known in Wales as 'Wales Palm Sunday', a singing contest is held. Famous Welsh singers sing and choirs gather from many different chapels.

'Happy Easter' in Welsh: *Hapus Pasg!*

## GERMANY

In Germany, children play a fun game called 'Chocolate Kiss'. The game is played using chocolate-coated marshmallows. Children try to keep a clean face as they gobble up marshmallows. Once they're all gone, the cleanest face wins.

'Happy Easter' in German: *Frohe Ostern!*

## EGYPT

Children in Egypt decorate eggs with many different colours. They do this delicately as they silently compete to make the prettiest egg.

'Happy Easter' in Arabic: *Fish Sa'id!*

## BRAZIL

Rio Carnival, held in Rio de Janeiro, kicks off over Easter in Brazil. A metre-long parade moves through the streets. It's one big, colourful party!

'Happy Easter' in Portuguese: *Feliz Páscoa!*

## SWEDEN

Children often dress up with colourful headscarves, painted red cheeks and long skirts to pretend they are witches. Small twigs and branches of birch or willow are commonly placed in vases within Swedish houses, along with small decorations and feathers.

'Happy Easter' in Swedish: *Glad Påsk!* ●



# PLAYGROUP Workshops

## 2015

### Cost per Playgroup Workshop (inc GST)

Playgroup SA Members	\$15
Playgroup SA Coordinators	\$15
Playgroup Group Booking (minimum of 4 people)	\$10 per person
Non-Members of Playgroup SA	\$40



**PLAYGROUP SA**  
Playing, learning, supporting families

### Enrolments / Enquiries

Playgroup SA 1800 171 882 or through submitting a 'Workshop Enrolment Form'.

*Bookings are essential to secure your place and payment is due strictly FIVE business days prior to the Playgroup Workshop.*

*No REFUNDS or CREDITS will be given without a minimum of five business days notice.*

### Crèche

*A crechè service is available on-site when stated. This service is included in the Workshop Cost.*

### Location

Playgroup SA Head Office  
91 Prospect Road, Prospect SA



CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS Training available 12 March / 18 June / 10 September  
*FREE for Playgroup Coordinators - Enquire with Playgroup SA for further details.*

## Coordinators Workshop

Are you thinking about starting a Playgroup?  
Are you a new Playgroup Coordinator?  
Are you interested in assisting with the running of your Playgroup?

The Coordinators Workshop will provide you with all the information that you need to assist in these roles!

This workshop includes invaluable tips on how to effectively run a Playgroup, as well as creative play ideas and useful information on the value and benefits of play. This is also a great opportunity to connect and brainstorm with other Playgroup Coordinators and Playgroup SA staff in developing your own Playgroup support network.

Thursday 19 February  
10am - 12:30pm  
Crèche available

Saturday 2 May  
10am - 12:30pm  
NO Crèche available

Thursday 20 August  
10am - 12:30pm  
Crèche available

Thursday 12 November  
6pm - 8pm  
NO Crèche available

This workshop is centred around age appropriate play ideas and activities for pre-school age children.

A change in the process of school intake has prompted a demand for stimulating ideas and activities for 4-5 year old Playgroupers, prior to school entry.

Pre-schoolers need and respond well to structure. They are more capable of managing intense emotions and they require routine to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Pre-school age children start to display more curious and questioning behaviours... they are more prone to pushing the boundaries and they often love to experiment with exploration and risk taking.

## Pre-Schoolers at Play



Thursday 5 March  
10am - 12pm  
*Crèche available*

Wednesday 4 November  
6pm - 8pm  
*NO Crèche available*

## Make & Play

Tuesday 12 May  
6pm - 8pm  
*NO Crèche available*

An opportunity for fun to MAKE and PLAY, create and share ideas and activities using homemade, recycled and inexpensive materials - for the Playgroup and the home. This workshop will explore the developmental process of creating your own play resources and will feature discussions about the types and categories of play, tips on how to create interactive play environments and hands on fun making toys!

## Messy Play

Explore the value and benefits of messy play and gain age appropriate play ideas - but most of all, be engaged and have fun!

Messy Play makes an enormous contribution to your child's early language and literacy development. It is a vital component to children's cognitive processes and developing creativity, and benefits all children's learning!

Thursday 19 March  
10am - 12pm  
*Crèche available*

## Music & Movement

Learn about the importance of music in early childhood. Discover how to run your own interactive Music & Movement session at Playgroup and gain fabulous ideas to get your playgroup families moving and singing. Includes actions and dances, props, musical instruments, parachute songs, songs that encourage movement and music for babies

Thursday 14 May  
10am - 12pm  
*NO Crèche available*

## Christmas Craft

Come along and celebrate the festive season with this fabulous hands-on art and craft workshop that will provide you with inspiring ideas to share with your children! A fun and interactive Christmas themed session that will explore a variety of art materials, techniques and ideas to use with young children in the lead up to Christmas.

Thursday 22 October  
10am - 12pm  
*Crèche available*



# SHARE THE LOVE

Embracing different parenting styles isn't always easy, but it's well worth the effort – you might even learn something new, says Mel Baker.

**WORDS** MEL BAKER, PLAYGROUP SA SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

**W**alking into a playgroup for the first time can be daunting and overwhelming. For one thing, it can make you acutely aware of your parenting style. From discipline and diet to fashion and lifestyle choices, parents can make very different choices.

But with diversity comes real benefits. When you discuss parenting experiences, ideas and strategies with other parents, you'll discover a few tips you can try yourself.

Remember that it's important not to be negative, but understanding, because at Playgroup, we all have a right to feel safe and share in a sense of belonging. If a parenting style is making others feel uncomfortable, try to address the issues as soon as they appear. A simple, friendly reminder to the group can be a subtle, constructive way to resolve the problem, rather than singling out families.

If the behaviour is considered risky to others, it must be addressed immediately. Feel free to contact Playgroup SA for help and advice on 1800 171 882.

Remember, we're all about interaction and fun and not 'sweating the small stuff'. And playgroups are as different as the people in them – there's one that's just right for you!

## TIPS FOR A JUDGEMENT-FREE PLAYGROUP

- Make the Playgroup SA Charter visible to families: aim to be welcoming and friendly, a safe place, co-operative and caring, a team effort, supportive and respectful.
- If a parent or carer arrives with a newborn, suggest someone in the group give baby a cuddle so an older sibling can have five minutes with their carer.
- Work together to supervise kids inside and outside.
- If you're lucky enough to have volunteers, ask them to help parents struggling with more than one child.
- Have options at the craft table to engage young and old.
- If possible, have a space outside where younger or immobile children can safely play while parents engage with older children. ●



## Playgroup Workshop Enrolment

All courses will be held at Playgroup SA Head Office  
91 Prospect Road, Prospect SA

### Personal details

Surname .....  
First name .....  
Email .....  
Playgroup SA Member # .....(if applicable)  
Preferred telephone.....

### Course details

*Creche is available for specified courses only and is included in the course cost.*

Course 1 Name .....  
Course Date .....  
# of children in creche? ..... Fee \$ .....  
Course 2 Name .....  
Course Date .....  
# of children in creche? ..... Fee \$ .....  
Course 3 Name .....  
Course Date .....  
# of children in creche? ..... Fee \$ .....  
Total Fee \$ .....

### Payment details

- ☐ Member Price \$15.00 per workshop  
☐ Non-Member Price \$40.00 per workshop  
☐ Group Booking 4+ people @ \$10 each - to be submitted together

I have made an EFT for the sum of \$ ..... to:  
Playgroup SA · BSB 105 022 · Account No 1092 59640

Or, please charge this fee to my credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

..... - ..... - .....  
Name on card .....  
Expiry date ..... / .....  
Cardholders signature .....

**Bookings are essential to secure your place and payment is due strictly FIVE business days prior to the Playgroup Workshop.**

**No REFUNDS or CREDITS will be given without a minimum of 5 business days notice.**

Playgroup SA Inc. 91 Prospect Road, Prospect SA 5082  
info@playgroupsa.com.au / 1800 171 882