

# State of Play

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF PLAYGROUP SA

ISSUE 3 2015

## LOVE & LEARN

GRANDPARENTS AT  
PLAYGROUP

**GET GROWING!**  
EASY SPRING  
GARDEN IDEAS

**THANKS, DAD**  
A GIFT FROM  
THE HEART



FLIP OVER FOR  
SA KIDS



## Letter from **STATE OF PLAY**

**W**elcome to another edition of *State of Play*. I hope you all managed to stay warm during the frosty winter and made the most of Playgroup to escape the grips of cabin fever.

We've got some great ideas for you this month to help you get out and enjoy the spring sunshine. You'll also find some fun suggestions for busy hands to celebrate Father's Day.

Our article on Kersbrook demonstrates the wonderful benefits a playgroup can have on a community.

We also hear from the marvellous grandparents who enrich playgroups each and every day.

Playgroup SA has been incredibly busy travelling all over the state visiting Playgroups this winter, including

stops at Mount Gambier, Jamestown, Mt Bryan-Hallett, Saddleworth, Kilburn, Pinaroo, Beverley and all the way up north to Leigh Creek for a Messy Play day in the school holidays. A big thank you to all who made us feel welcome! It is such a highlight to see fun, games, learning, laughter and friendship evolving at Playgroups each week. Keep an eye out for details about our annual Playgroup at the Zoo event. It's getting exciting here at Playgroup HQ putting the day together.

Finally, Happy Father's Day to all dads out there – we hope you have a fantastic day!

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







# FOR ALL THE DADS

Dads love to get spoilt on Father's Day, and the best presents come without a price tag. Here's a very special gift idea that he will cherish for many years.

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

**M**any will come together to celebrate the love they share for dads and the father figures in their lives this Father's Day.

It's a day to show appreciation for the love, care and efforts of our fathers and father figures, whether it's stepfathers, grandfathers, relatives, guardians, foster fathers or close family friends.

This is also a time to think of dads-to-be, single dads and, sadly, dads who have lost children, dads we have lost and the men that play the roles of both mum and dad.

The following poem reminds us that sometimes we need to slow down a little. Along with a painting of your child's footprints or a mould of their feet, it can make a beautiful keepsake this Father's Day.

## **Walk a little slower, Daddy**

*"Walk a little slower, Daddy!" said a little child so small.*

*"I'm following in your footsteps and I don't want to fall.*

*Sometimes your steps are very fast, sometimes they're hard to see;*

*So walk a little slower Daddy, for you are leading me.*

*Some day when I'm all grown up, you're what I want to be.*

*Then I will have a little child who'll want to follow me.*

*And I would want to lead just right, and know that I was true;*

*So, walk a little slower, Daddy, for I must follow you!"*

## **Salt dough (for footprint keepsake)**

### **Ingredients**

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 cup of water

### **Method**

1. In a large bowl mix salt and flour together.
2. Gradually stir in water. Mix well until it forms a dough-like consistency.
3. Turn the dough onto the bench and knead with your hands for about five minutes, or until smooth and combined. The longer you knead your dough, the smoother it will be.
4. Mould into a circle shape large enough to press both child's feet into (moulding the dough into a plastic plate works well and makes it easier to move).
5. Leave to dry.
6. When completely dry, you can paint the footprint keepsake in bright colours.
7. Present to the special father figure in your life on Sunday 6 September.

# SPRING TO IT!

There's no better time to get out in the garden to share the joys of growing, cooking and eating fresh food with your kids.

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

**T**he sun is shining, the bees are buzzing... why not introduce gardening activities into your playgroup sessions this spring?

It's a great way to teach kids about where their food comes from and to enjoy the outdoors with your little ones. And there are many benefits to nature play, including boosting health and immunity, building confidence and connecting with the environment.

For a fun, easy activity, start with a clean, recycled two-litre plastic container.



## Watering can

Secure the lid tightly, then with the help of an adult, punch small holes in the lid with a fork. Decorate the bottle with anything you have available. (Foam stickers work well). Fill up the water bottle with enough water so that it is not too heavy for children to lift and you're ready to head outside to water plants, trees and grass.



## Bird feeder

With help from an adult, cut out a piece from the front of the container. Decorate with stickers and add a piece of string for a handle. Fill the base with bird seed and find a branch where you can hang your feeder. Keep a look out for what kinds of birds visit the feeder.

## Planter pot

Use the same method as the bird feeder, but make sure the base is deep enough to hold the plant and its roots. Add some potting mix and plant some seeds or seedlings and hang outside.

*Note: Choose pesticide-free potting mix. Encourage children to wear gloves, use a spade and always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after use.*

## Let's grow!

Spring is a good time to start a playgroup shared garden. Children learn how plants grow by planting

seeds or seedlings, watering them each week, watching them flourish and waiting for them to ripen, then getting involved in harvesting and preparing food in the kitchen.

If you have time, it's best to start with seeds. Plant them in pots or a garden bed, water and weed weekly, taking care to follow instructions on how to grow and care for each variety.

See our recipes below for some easy ways to cook using your own plants, or bring in fresh shop-bought produce and talk to your group about where the food comes from and how it is grown.



Plant any of the following now and they'll be ready to harvest by the end of term:

**Baby carrots** are quick to mature and prefer full sun. When planting seedlings, check their size after about six weeks by pulling one carrot out of the ground. If it's about 10cm long,

it's ready. (They can be eaten smaller, too). Enjoy them fresh by removing the carrot tops and giving them a good wash. They're ready to eat as they are, or try them with a dip – yum!

**Mint** grows better when planted as a seedling. Grow it in a pot and watch it develop throughout the term. Mint prefers a cool, moist position in partial shade and, once established, will grow for many years. Mint dies down in winter and sends up new shoots in spring. When required, cut leaves from the top using scissors.

**Strawberries** are delicious, easy to grow and prefer full sun. They are ready to harvest after about 11 weeks and they are always popular among playgroup-age children. Given that strawberries can ripen at different times, you may like to freeze them in snap lock bags when ripe. Keep adding more as they ripen until you have enough to use.

**Tomatoes** prefer full sun and may need a stake to grow up against. Some varieties can be ready within eight weeks if planted from seedlings. You may like to try growing cherry tomatoes. Tomatoes can be eaten fresh or made into a pasta or pizza sauce.

### Mint yoghurt

#### Ingredients

- 2/3 cup Greek-style natural yoghurt
- 1/3 cup fresh mint, chopped
- 1 tablespoon caster sugar (optional)

#### Method

1. Mix ingredients together.
2. Serve with pita bread triangles or vegetable sticks such as carrot, celery and cucumber.



### Strawberry smoothie

If using fresh strawberries, add a frozen banana or use other fresh fruits with a cup of ice (optional).

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 ripe banana
- ¾ cup milk or alternative

#### Method

1. Place all ingredients into a blender and mix until smooth and creamy.
2. Leftovers can be poured into ice cube trays with a pop stick and frozen.

### Microwave tomato sauce

This sauce is great on cooked pasta or added to pizza bases, and can be puréed if preferred. Makes approximately ¾ cup.

#### Ingredients

- 250g (20 to 30) whole cherry tomatoes (or large tomatoes, diced into chunks)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ½ teaspoon sugar (optional)

#### Method

1. Wash cherry tomatoes and place in a microwave-safe container with soy sauce and oregano.
2. Microwave, covered, on high for five minutes.
3. Remove from microwave and stir or mash with a fork.
4. Add sugar if required (depends on sweetness of the tomatoes used).
5. Replace the lid and microwave for a further minute.



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

As parents return to work sooner, grandparents are stepping up to care for their grandchildren – and turning to Playgroup for help.

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

**G**randparents and great grandparents are a wealth of family knowledge, culture and history. They play such an important role in the lives of young children.

You only need to see the smiles and laughter that come from both grandparents and children when they're in the same company to see how important and special these bonds are.

But as many parents return to work and find that conventional child care options cannot meet their needs, the role of the grandparent is changing. Many now care for their grandchild or grandchildren on a part time or full-time basis.

Playgroup can be a great help for grandparents because it provides a stimulating environment and access to resources not normally available at home.

Grandparents tell us that Playgroup helps take the pressure off and allows children to interact with others.

"Playgroup allows us to get out of the house and helps break up the day," one says. "It's too cold to play outside in winter and Playgroup is a great warm space to spend quality time together."

## **Make friends**

Going to Playgroup is a great way to meet other families and watch your grandchildren grow confidence in building friendships. You might meet other grandparents at Playgroup, too.

## **Share the love**

When you see your grandchild make or discover something new, it's great

to share these achievements and celebrate these milestones with others.

## **Stay in touch**

Through meeting other families, you are likely to learn about other community support and services in your area. You might learn about events and festivals to help you plan more outings with your grandchildren. Playgroup can help you stay in touch with new thinking on parenting ideas and advice.

## **Help at hand**

It can be hard – and expensive – to come up with new ways to entertain little ones. Playgroup provides access to fun activities and resources.

## **Routines**

Children love routines and cope better when they're in place. When you're at a weekly Playgroup, you'll find there is a routine within the two hours. Your grandchildren will enjoy knowing when it's snack time, pack up and song time.

Are there grandparents at your Playgroup? Why not plan a 'Grandparents at Playgroup' day and advertise this within your Playgroup? With a welcoming event, you might start a trend and see grandparents coming along more regularly.

*Did you know that your Playgroup SA family membership covers the whole family, including grandparents? For more information on Playgroups in your area, call Playgroup SA on free call 1800 171 882.*





"I would absolutely recommend Playgroups to other grandparents. It's a stimulating environment for both the grandchildren and the grandparents. It's a wonderful community space to have access to resources that we would not normally have at home."



Grace, Thomas and Isla at the Kersbrook playgroup.



## STARTING OVER

The Kersbrook community rallied around its local Playgroup in the wake of the devastating Sampson Flat bushfires.

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

**W**hen bushfires swept through the Kersbrook region in January this year, the local Playgroup faced a challenging time.

The group, based at the Kersbrook

Primary School, lost most of its resources when its storage shed was destroyed by fire.

But the Playgroup itself never closed during or after the fires and became a place for families to find refuge during

and after the disaster. Helpers stepped in to relocate a special painted fence at the Playgroup to keep it safe from the fires, which now has a new home above the sandpit.

Playgroup SA visited the group and

found that the sense of community spirit is strong among residents who have a positive approach to moving forward during the town's recovery.

Kersbrook Playgroup Coordinator Belinda Smith says families, including Playgroup members, helped raise money to rebuild the sheds and replace resources.

She says it was a sad moment when families discovered how badly their resources had been damaged and the impact it would have on the community.

"The community rallied together over the weeks and months that followed, and when the new resources arrived, everyone was cheering with excitement, and ready

to move forward."

Since the disaster, the number of families attending Kersbrook Playgroup has increased, thanks to a new awareness of its services as well as a newfound desire to support and be involved in the group.

"The community really pulled together to help one another out," Belinda says. "People were bringing their friend's children to Playgroup to give families the time they needed to fix fences and damaged homes.

"Our Playgroup has become a great space for families to share their recovery stories and discover new friendships to help rebuild the community."

To discover your local Playgroup, call Playgroup SA on free call 1800 171 882.

#### Fire facts

The Sampson Flat bushfires began on 2 January and lasted until 9 January during a week of extreme heat. The fires began in Sampson Flat, travelled towards Kersbrook and toward the Adelaide Hills. A total of 27 houses were destroyed.



**my first Crayola**

**My First Crayola art supplies and creative activities help toddlers and preschoolers, ages 12 to 36 months, transform ideas and feelings into visible form with colorful tools made specifically for little hands.**

**NONTOXIC 12+ months FOR LITTLE HANDS**

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# PLAYGROUP SA WORKSHOPS & ACCREDITED COURSES

## WORKSHOPS

**Cost:** Playgroup SA members \$15 (inc. GST). Playgroup SA coordinators \$15 (inc. GST)

Playgroup group booking (minimum of four people) \$10 per person (inc. GST)  
Non-members \$40 (inc. GST)

**Where:** Playgroup SA Head Office, 91 Prospect Road, Prospect SA

**Bookings:** To enrol, contact Playgroup SA on 1800 171 882 or submit a workshop enrolment form. Bookings are essential to secure your place and payment is due strictly five business days prior to the workshop. No refunds or credits will be given without a minimum of five business days' notice.

**Crèche:** A crèche service is available on-site in some cases. This service is included in the cost of the workshop.

## COORDINATORS WORKSHOP

Are you thinking about starting a Playgroup? Are you a new Playgroup Coordinator?

Are you interested in helping run your Playgroup?

This course will provide you with all the information that you need to help 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.

**When:** Thursday 12 November, 6pm to 8pm

*NO crèche available*

## PRE-SCHOOLERS AT PLAY

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

The new single school intake model has prompted a demand for stimulating ideas and activities for four to five-year-old children at Playgroup 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-schoolers 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.

**When:** Wednesday 4 November, 6pm to 8pm

*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. This is 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.

**When:** Thursday 22 October, 10am to 12pm

*Crèche available*

## ACCREDITED COURSES

### CHILD-SAFE

#### ENVIRONMENTS COURSE

Explore the issues of child protection, gain an understanding of child abuse and neglect, learn about your responsibility to report concerns about children at risk and receive your certificate in Child-Safe Environments (CSE) in this Mandatory Reporting Training course.

**Please note:** In order to be a qualified mandated notifier within the education system in SA, teacher registration requires everyone to complete CSE training, in addition to the school specific RAN-EC online training (implemented in October 2013).

**When:** Thursday 10 September, 9.30am to 4pm

**Cost:** Playgroup SA Playgroup coordinators: FREE

Playgroup SA members: \$25 (inc. GST)  
Non-Playgroup SA members \$75 (inc. GST)

## VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

For more information on Playgroup SA workshops, please visit our new website at [www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au)



# SAVE THE DATE



PLAYGROUP SA  
Playing, learning, supporting families

## Playgroup at the ZOO

[www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au)



Friday 23 October, 2015 · 10am to 2pm