



## 1. What do you want your playgroup to look like?

- Welcoming, safe, physically and emotionally secure
- Non judgemental
- Respectful
- Fun for kids and adults
- Accepting
- Easy communication
- Honest
- Informative in terms of local parenting events, networking and about playgroup
- Forgiveness and empathy
- Cultural diversity – songs and posters
- Guidelines
- Routines
- Goals, aims and flexible program
- Equal say and opinions valued
- Committee/suggestion box
- Value and utilising individual skills
- Time to talk
- Buddy for the day
- Excited and supported
- Smiles
- A facilitator or two
- Parents supporting each other and supervising each others children
- Participation
- Seeing play complementing the playgroups resources and needs
- Inclusiveness
- Flexible
- Mixture of activities across all age groups
- Adults engaged in play with children
- Welcome pack
- Artwork, posters music, toys, cosy corner, and books
- Colourful
- Fresh air, bright and clean
- Someone to welcome me and talk to you every time you see them. Touching base and introducing them to other families, orientation of where facilities are. If you pay money, what is it for?
- Deal with issues around children i.e. biting, fighting, tensions and role modelling positive play appropriately
- interpreters

## 2. What role do you hope participants play?

- Active and non judgemental
- Duty of care
- Leadership, ownership

- Decision making – behaviour guidance
- Planning
- Sharing of roles
- Inclusion
- Friendly
- Role models for children
- Someone to welcome new families and explain roles. Person to contact parents who have not attended
- Set up and pack away
- Parents take responsibility of children they bring
- Supportive
- Sharing of information
- Talk to one another and arrange times to get together with their children
- Gather together away from playgroup but not form a clique
- Buddy system
- All participants to be welcoming
- Celebrations for different cultural days and practises

### **3. Wisdom on getting parents involved at playgroup**

- Supposed to be fun
- Encourage others to participate by bring them along
- Families work together for babysitting
- Impart knowledge of skills
- Follow up phone call to first time attendees
- Learn to trust own instincts
- Nice to know that others are in a similar position with their children
- Everyone to participate
- Good communication
- Great way to share ideas or learn new information
- Opportunity to help others

### **4. What may stop a person from participating at playgroup?**

- Fear of rejection
- Self judging
- Transport
- Not feeling welcome
- Feeling like they won't fit in
- Fights with other families
- Weather
- Centerlink
- Parents returning to work
- Child with additional needs which differ to others in the playgroup
- Pressure for joining playgroup committee
- Cluttered, uninteresting environment
- No age appropriate activities
- Cultural – language barriers
- Shyness
- Lack of confidence

- No knowing about playgroups in the first place
- Judgement towards children or parents with special needs
- Judgement towards child's behaviour
- Feeling of inadequacy due to child's developmental milestones
- Day and time that doesn't suit
- Venue
- Commitment of playgroups members, not all turning up to playgroup
- Pressure on cleaning and pack up standards
- Beliefs and parenting styles
- Group dynamics
- Different socio economic status
- Age differences
- Interests
- Personal behaviours/children's behaviours
- Expectations
- Premmie babies
- Allergies
- Already established group that is cliquey
- Reluctance to share
- Personal problems such as depression

## **5. What strategies have you used to encourage participation?**

- Buddy system
- Clear guidelines
- Open communication
- Finding a group that suits their needs
- Open discussion for concerns outside playgroup
- Family social networks outside of playgroup
- Follow up with parents and ask them why they don't want to come
- Texting families to invite them or welcome letter
- Welcoming person
- Mediator – someone to help with disquiet
- Families can introduce stories, songs and crafts reflecting their cultures
- Food
- Make people feel valued i.e. skill and ideas sharing
- Offer training
- Support i.e. food bank and counselling
- Changing session time that may suit them better or start a new session
- Modify snack time for families with additional needs
- Phoning playgroup participants to remind them.
- Newsletters
- Special activities
- Organising transport
- Invite dads
- Excursions
- Saturday playgroups for target groups
- Introducing families to support one another
- Fact sheets about role of playgroup committees

- Set up an inviting environment
- Use common language in mixed language groups
- Try a couple of different groups – find the right fit

## **6. Participants Top Five Practical Ideas**

- Training playgroup – hand holding
- Always be available to the supported playgroup leader
- Introduce person/playgroup leader
- Be honest regarding funding from day 1, explain when funding will run out. This helps groups to feel comfortable/get used to transition
- Don't pull out too soon
- Important to keep relationship going with participants
- Create contact list with participants
- Use phone, sms, facebook to connect
- Involve dads
- Buddy system
- Designated person to welcome new families
- Holiday/excursions, outing, visitors and events outside playgroup
- Name tags for people in the group with the children's colours matched to other family members
- Sharing of things from home (different cultures, meals etc.)
- Provide food
- Follow up calls to playgroup participants
- When transitioning a playgroup, don't cut all ties!
- Plan for communicating with families culturally
- Involve families with their children playing
- Get families preparing food and pack up time.
- Parents to have some ownership in their playgroup
- Facilitator to set up experiences suitable for all age appropriate.
- Friendly – supported
- Empathy – people needs/background
- Aware of peoples cultures and backgrounds
- Organised/roster, have room set up and inviting
- Know your community and needs
- Plan to have the new family welcomed by facilitator as well as an existing family
- Remind families about playgroup and make them feel that they are missed if they don't come to playgroup
- Follow up – talk to families to get feedback, evaluate
- Involve families in decision making
- Suggestion box
- Ask why people don't return
- Keep it fun and simple
- Engage children and families
- Support each other.
- Contact list to distribute amongst playgroup - with families consent
- Newsletters with upcoming activities and community events
- Email or call the week/day before playgroup
- Music and movement session

- Networking opportunity
- Finding out ideas from others
- Learning more about Playgroup Victoria, what they do and how they help
- The role and responsibilities of all involved with running playgroups ie. Maternal and child health nurse (MCHN), parents and facilitators
- Trust your instincts
- Always build on what people are already doing well
- Don't assume
- Don't judge
- Enjoy time spent with each other and with your children
- Creative environment that is safe, warm and friendly
- Accept not everyone is initially comfortable in the playgroup environment
- Playgroup is as much about the parent as the children
- Be flexible
- Engaging and interesting play experiences
- Put yourself in some else's shoes- how do you feel walking into a room full of people you don't know?
- Don't be hard on your self if the day doesn't go as planned
- Group time repeat songs etc, so parents and children learn then and can recall at home.
- Do special activities to celebrate special events i.e. national playgroup week
- Introduce practical activities that can be repeated at home.
- Clear guidelines at playgroup
- Role modelling
- Personal invitation and follow up
- Opportunity for sharing parenting ideas and not feeling judged
- Careful the things you do, children will see and learn, children may not obey, but children will listen, children will look to you for which way to turn.
- Careful before you say "listen to me" children will listen.
- Pick up parents and take to playgroup
- Points system for baby sitting
- Card system for rostering jobs
- Provide posters in the room that explain basic expectations
- MCH – 10 key ages and stages visits
- For supported playgroup transition at the beginning – introduce the leader as short term training leader. Clear role of the leader is to show parents what is a playgroup? How it works and scaffold (coach) the families.
- Use the five start modules to work with the families throughout the process
- Playgroup start up kit for community playgroups
- It is a time when children can play with others in a new environment other than home.
- Don't rush parents
- Be clear about the expectations of the group
- Have a clean fresh smelling room
- Don't try and solve everyone's problems, seek assistance/refer families to playgroup Victoria or municipal playgroup workers
- Make sure families or potential families are involved in planning and setting up new playgroups
- Don't overwhelm families with too much information
- Name tags for everyone, colour coded or picture or photo coded into family groups with child's label on their back

- Ring families and stagger arrival time for first day to make sure to welcome/orientate everyone as well as possible
- Identify natural parent leaders/strengths and create opportunities for these to be shown
- Be willing to go a bit further to offer support when the opportunity arises
- Celebrate strengths of the group, develop a positive attitude and let it rub off on others
- Ask if parents need help. Help them to the care. This is the perfect chance to connect. Don't wait for them to ask you