

## Playgroup equipment

Not all venues come complete with equipment and playgroup families may need to source their own. To get started make a list of what toys and equipment you need. Start with toys, books, play equipment, art and craft materials. Most community venues will have a kettle, plates, bowls, cups and cutlery. If not, you will need to provide these as well.

### Get families involved

Give a couple of families the task of searching second hand and charity shops, fetes, garage sales or eBay. Local families and businesses or playgroups about to close might be happy to donate items.

### Look for community grants

Playgroups have successfully applied for grants to improve playgroup facilities. Visit your local council website to find out about grants in your area. Playgroup Victoria has information on local government community grants, other funding sources and tips for applying for grants behind the Member login at [www.playgroup.org.au](http://www.playgroup.org.au).

### Make homemade toys

You can make your own toys from recycled materials such as cling wrap rolls, cardboard boxes and milk cartons. Playgroup Victoria has loads of homemade toy ideas in A to Z playsheets behind the Member login at [www.playgroup.org.au](http://www.playgroup.org.au).



**Finding a venue for a new or existing playgroup is easier than you think. Look for something that offers both indoor and outdoor play spaces suitable for small children, kitchen facilities, storage areas for toys and equipment, car parking, public transport nearby, children's toilets and affordable rent.**

### Start a new session at an existing playgroup

This is the simplest way to find a suitable playgroup venue; equipment is available and a structure already established. To find a playgroup in your local area that has room for another session visit the 'Find a playgroup' page at [www.playgroup.org.au](http://www.playgroup.org.au) or call Playgroup Victoria on 1800 171 882.

### Contact your local council

Playgroups meet in council buildings such as neighbourhood houses, maternal and child health centres, kindergartens and community halls. These venues are often centrally located, accessible and affordable.

### Talk to the local school principal

Playgroups connect families with other families and when based at a school the foundation is laid for an easy transition towards the next logical step in a child's life. Some schools offer free facilities to playgroup parents.

### Consider other venues

Playgroups can also meet at church halls, sporting clubs, scout or guide halls, senior citizen club rooms, libraries, cultural club rooms, leisure centres or child care centres. Some baby playgroups meet as home playgroups until children are mobile or the group outgrows the available space. Visit [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au) to find suitable venues in your area.



Inform Playgroup Victoria of your intention to close and if your venue is available for another playgroup.

If members would like to join another playgroup they can do so without paying another membership fee to Playgroup Victoria.

## Closing down your playgroup

An incorporated playgroup will have a constitution with a dissolution clause outlining requirements for closing down the playgroup. Carefully follow these requirements and inform Consumer Affairs Victoria of your intention to stop being incorporated. If your playgroup is not incorporated, check if it has a constitution or closing guidelines.

### Steps to closing down a playgroup

- Call a meeting of all existing members to discuss the closing down process and allocate responsibilities.
- Carefully document all decisions made at this meeting and whose responsibility it is to carry out these decisions.
- Inform the building owner of your intention to stop operating.
- Pay outstanding rent and follow up all negotiations in writing, keeping a copy for the files.
- Finalise all paper work.
- Keep accident, injury and attendance records for seven years for insurance purposes.
- Pay outstanding debts.
- Close the bank account.
- Consider how the remaining money will be distributed.

**Note:** If your playgroup has no constitution or rules that say how assets will be distributed, consider donating money and equipment to other playgroups in the area. As a service to playgroups, Playgroup Victoria will hold any excess money in trust. An agreement will be negotiated with the playgroup as to how, when and where the money will be used.

### Distribution of equipment

Make a detailed inventory of all equipment. Beside each item clearly indicate where the item was distributed.

All playgroup money, assets and equipment belong to the playgroup community, not the committee arranging the closure. In the past, incorrect or inappropriate distribution of equipment and assets has resulted in charges being laid by police.

If a former member wants to reclaim donated equipment where it was sold or donated needs to be clearly shown.

### Leaving your building

Any fixtures you have put in the building including light fittings, built-in heaters, built-in fans, fences and fixed play equipment, legally become part of the building and cannot be taken.

Check with the building owner if equipment can be stored to help families who may want to restart a playgroup in the future.

### Selling off equipment

It is illegal to fundraise for personal gain. Any equipment purchased by fundraising is common property. You cannot simply divide the play equipment among the remaining families.

In the spirit of playgroups being community based, donate equipment to playgroups in the area or Playgroup Victoria can arrange for your equipment to be given to new or disadvantaged playgroups.

Put a notice in the local newspaper or Playgroup Victoria's online community noticeboard e.g. 'Playtime playgroup is about to close, all assets and money are to be shared between local playgroups'.