



Guidelines for Roster Playgroups

Playgroup Victoria is not a regulatory authority for playgroups. The committee of each playgroup is responsible for the operation of the playgroup and for complying with the guidelines. Playgroup Victoria is available for assistance on request.

Amended September 2004

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GUIDELINES FOR ROSTER PLAYGROUPS

PART 1 – PRELIMINARY

1. *Objective*

The objectives of these Guidelines are to define a playgroup and set minimum requirements to allow a flexibility of service delivery that ensures children are cared for safely and their developmental needs are met while attending a roster playgroup.

2. *Commencement*

January 1999

3. *Definitions*

‘playgroup’

A playgroup means a community group of three or more parents and/or carers who meet together regularly to socialise and to provide play opportunities for their babies to preschool aged children. The playgroup must be non-commercial in nature.

‘roster playgroup’

A roster playgroup means a playgroup that rosters parents and carers to supervise and provide a play program for the children while some parents are absent. A roster playgroup is non-commercial in nature but may employ a person to assist with a particular function of the playgroup.

‘coordinator’ – person in charge

A coordinator is a parent or carer who is responsible for the coordination and administrative tasks at each roster playgroup session. This position may be rostered.

‘rostered parents/carers’

Rostered parents/carers refers to the parents/carers who are responsible for the implementation of play activities and supervision of the children at the playgroup session while other parents/carers have the option to be absent while their children attend the playgroup.

‘lawful authority’

This means a power, duty, responsibility or authority conferred at common law or under an Act (including an Act of the Commonwealth) in relation to a child.

‘guardian’

In relation to the child, this means the legal guardian of the child or the person who has the custody or control of the child.

Note: Throughout this document the term parent is interchangeable with the term ‘guardian’.

PART 2 – REGISTRATION OF ROSTER PLAYGROUPS

Division 1 - Applications

4. *Registration of a roster playgroup*

Registration - A playgroup that complies with the Guidelines can apply for registration to Playgroup Victoria to function as a roster playgroup. A completed registration declaration is required for approval by Playgroup Victoria.

5. *Conditions or restrictions*

Roster playgroups must comply with the following conditions in order to be registered.

- (a) the playgroup is required to have a comprehensive insurance cover to include:
 - public liability;
 - directors and officers;
 - personal accident;
 - property;
 - WorkCare (if applicable);
- (b) the playgroup is required to be an incorporated association;
- (c) roster playgroups are required to have each child's enrolment information available at the playgroup. Conditions and restrictions are that information in a child enrolment record is not divulged or communicated, directly or indirectly, to any person except:
 - (i) to the extent necessary for the functioning of the playgroup or the medical treatment of the child;
 - (ii) to a parent or guardian of the child or other person who has lawful authority to require the information;
 - (iii) if expressly authorised, permitted or required to be given by or under any Act or law;
 - (iv) with the written consent of the person who provided the information;
- (d) roster playgroups have a ratio of at least one adult to every four children;
- (e) a playgroup session does not exceed three hours a day or four hours a week;
- (f) that children are aged between 2-6 years and not attending school;
- (g) not more than 21 children are in attendance.

6. *Application for initial registration*

Registration forms are available from Playgroup Victoria, 346 Albert Street, Brunswick, phone 9388 1599, fax 9380 6733.

7. *Annual renewal of registration*

Roster playgroups must renew annually. Forms are available from Playgroup Victoria, (address as above).

8. *Failure to comply with the Guidelines*

- (1) If Playgroup Victoria becomes aware or receives notification that a roster playgroup may not be complying with these Guidelines, Playgroup Victoria will write to the playgroup coordinator;
 - (a) outlining the alleged non-compliance/s;
 - (b) advising on the action required to rectify the alleged non-compliance;
 - (c) setting out a timeframe for rectifying the alleged non compliance; and
 - (d) inviting the playgroup to provide a written response to the allegations within 21 days.
- (2) Subject to paragraph 4, if Playgroup Victoria is satisfied that the alleged non compliance
 - (a) cannot be substantiated; or
 - (b) has been rectified within the period referred to in paragraph (1)(c);no further action will be taken against the playgroup.
- (3) If Playgroup Victoria is satisfied that a playgroup has failed to rectify the non-compliance within the period referred to in paragraph (1)(c), the playgroup may be deregistered.
- (4) Playgroup Victoria may deregister a playgroup which repeatedly breaches these Guidelines; and
- (5) the Department of Human Services will be notified of any non-registered roster playgroup that continues to function.

PART 3 – RECORDS

9. *Records to be kept by the playgroup*

- (1) The coordinator on duty must ensure that the following records are maintained and accessible at each playgroup session -
 - (a) an attendance book;
 - (b) child enrolment records;
 - (c) a medication book;
 - (d) an accident, injury and illness book;
 - (e) where a person is employed – an employment record.
- (2) The coordinator on duty must take reasonable steps to ensure that all records are accurate.

10. *Matters to be recorded in attendance book*

The coordinator must ensure that the name and time of arrival and departure of each child are recorded in the attendance book and the attendance book is signed by the person who delivers the child to the playgroup and by the person who takes the child from the playgroup.

11. *Matters to be recorded in enrolment records*

The coordinator must ensure that the following information is inserted in each child's enrolment record-

- (a) the name, date of birth and address of the of the child;
- (b) the name, address and telephone number of each parent or guardian with whom the child resides;
- (c) the name, address and telephone number of any other parent or guardian of the child (if applicable);
- (d) the name, address and telephone number of any person who has lawful authority to collect the child from the playgroup, or who is authorised by such a person to collect the child;
- (e) any court orders provided relating to the powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child;
- (f) the name, address and telephone number of any person who has lawful authority to consent to the medical treatment of the child;
- (g) an authority signed by a person who has lawful authority to consent to the medical treatment of the child authorising the playgroup to seek medical treatment by a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service;
- (h) the name, address and telephone number of any person who has lawful authority to request or permit the administration of medication to the child;
- (i) the name, address and telephone number of any person who is to be notified of any accident, injury, trauma or illness involving the child;
- (j) the language or languages spoken in the child's home;
- (k) the name, address and telephone number of the child's doctor or medical service;
- (l) details of allergies or other relevant medical conditions and needs of the child and any management procedure to be followed with respect to that allergy, condition or need;
- (m) details of any dietary restrictions for the child.

12. *Matters to be recorded in medication book*

The coordinator must ensure that the following details are recorded in the medication book-

- (a) the name of the child;
- (b) the request or permission to administer medication;
- (c) the name of the medication;
- (d) the time and date the medication was last administered;
- (e) the time and date, or the circumstances under which, the medication should be next administered;
- (f) the dosage of the medication to be administered;
- (g) the dosage that was administered to the child;
- (h) the time and date when the medication was administered;
- (i) the name and signature of the person who administered the medication;
- (j) the name and signature of the person who checked the dosage administered.

13. *Matters to be recorded in accident, injury and illness book*

The coordinator must ensure that the following details are recorded in the accident, injury and illness book-

- (a) details of any accident in relation to a child or injury received by a child or trauma to which a child has been subjected while at the playgroup including -
 - (i) the name of the child;
 - (ii) the circumstances leading to the accident, injury or trauma;
 - (iii) any products or structures involved;
 - (iv) the time and date the accident occurred, the injury was received or the child was subjected to the trauma;
- (b) any illness which becomes apparent while the child is attending the playgroup;
- (c) the action taken in relation to the accident, injury, trauma or illness;
- (d) the time and date and the name of the person who was notified of the accident, injury, trauma or illness;
- (e) the name and signature of the person making the entry.

PART 4 – PROVISION OF INFORMATION

14. *Information to be available*

- (1) The coordinator must ensure that the following information is available for all playgroup families –
 - (a) the hours and days of operation of the playgroup;
 - (b) the name of the coordinator/s;
 - (c) an outline of the play program provided for the children;
 - (d) arrangements for the delivery and collection of children;
 - (e) arrangements for the payment for membership to the playgroup and the cost charged by the playgroup.

Policies and procedures

- (f) the policy of the playgroup with respect to employment; including compliance with all legal requirements;
 - (g) the policy of the playgroup with respect to behaviour management;
 - (h) the policy outlining the process that a parent/carer must take in order to make a complaint to the playgroup committee or to Playgroup Victoria. It should include the name and telephone number of the nominated person at the playgroup to whom complaints may be addressed;
 - (i) membership requirements and enrolment procedures;
 - (j) the policy of the playgroup with respect to safety including procedures for dealing with an emergency;
 - (k) procedures for dealing with illness and with infectious disease;
 - (l) procedures for determining and changing policies and procedures.
- (2) The playgroup must ensure that job descriptions clearly state the responsibilities, duties and limitations of -
 - rostered parents/carers;
 - coordinators;
 - paid employees;
 - volunteer assistants;and are available to families.

15. *Access to the playgroup*

Subject to any court order to the contrary, the coordinator must ensure that any parent or guardian of a playgroup child can –

- (a) enter the playgroup at any time during the hours of operation; and
- (b) exchange information about the child with those rostered on duty.

PART 5 – ROSTERING

16. *Definition of a ‘rostered parent/carer’*

A rostered parent/carer means a parent or approved carer who is rostered to take responsibility for the children at playgroup while other parents or carers are absent. This includes

- (a) the coordinator;
- (b) any paid employee; or
- (c) volunteer assistants as agreed by the playgroup.

17. *Minimum requirements*

- (a) The coordinator must ensure that at least two rostered parents/carers are on duty whenever the children attend playgroup without their parent or guardians.
- (b) When a roster playgroup employs a paid leader the coordinator must ensure that at least one rostered person on duty be a parent.

18. *Child/adult ratios*

The ratio of parents/carers is one for every four children. Number of children (including siblings) is not to exceed 21.

19. *Employment*

That where persons are employed it is preferable that they have experience or qualifications commensurate with the level of responsibility they are employed to undertake.

PART 6 – CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

20. *Educational or recreational programs*

The coordinator is responsible for a play program for each child that is –

- (a) based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and
- (b) sensitive to the individual differences of those children.

21. *Equipment*

The coordinator must ensure that each child at a roster playgroup has access to furniture, materials and equipment suitable for the play program provided for that child.

PART 7 – HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Division 1 – Security

22. *Protection of children from hazards*

The coordinator of each playgroup session must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children at the roster playgroup from any hazard likely to cause injury.

23. *Adequate supervision of children*

The coordinator of each playgroup session must ensure that all children are adequately supervised at all times when on the playgroup premises.

24. *Discipline of children*

The coordinator of each playgroup session must ensure that no child at a roster playgroup is subject to:

- (a) any form of corporal punishment; or
- (b) any discipline which is unreasonable in the circumstances

25. *Access to children*

The coordinator must ensure that a child at playgroup is not-

- (a) given into the care of any person other than-
 - (i) a parent; or
 - (ii) a guardian; or
 - (iii) a person who has lawful authority to collect the child from the playgroup
 - (iv) a person who is authorised by the parent, guardian or person who has lawful authority to collect the child.

26. *Taking a child or children outside the playgroup premises*

- (1) A child cannot be taken off the playgroup premises by a rostered parent/carer unless
 - (a) the rostered parent/carer is the parent or guardian of the child;
 - (b) a written authorisation for the removal of the child has been obtained from a parent, guardian or any other person with lawful authority to provide it; or
 - (c) the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment or in any other emergency.
- (2) All parents or guardians are required to attend outings and events outside the playgroup premises.

Division 2 – Safety

27. *Emergency procedures*

The coordinator must ensure that emergency procedures are developed and regularly practised with all rostered parents, employed person, volunteers and children attending the playgroup and that a written policy be available regarding the removal of a child requiring medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment in any other emergency.

28. *Communication equipment*

The coordinator must ensure that the playgroup has ready access to an operating telephone when the children are attending the playgroup.

Division 3 – Hygiene and Personal Care

29. *Personal hygiene needs of children*

- (1) The coordinator must ensure that the personal hygiene needs of children attending the playgroup are attended to as soon as practicable.
- (2) The coordinator must ensure that children attending the playgroup do not make common use of items intended for a child's personal care.

Division 4 – Administration of Medicines

30. *Authorisation to administer medication*

- (1) The coordinator must ensure that if medication is administered to a child attending the playgroup in the absence of their parent/carer -
 - (a) the person whose name is recorded in the child's enrolment record as being authorised to request or permit the administration of medication to the child has given a written request or permission to administer the medication; and
 - (b) the medication is administered from its original container bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry or use by date; and
 - (c) the dosage of the medication administered to the child is checked by a person other than the person administering the medication.
- (2) Sub-guideline 30(1) (as above) does not apply in an emergency if the person referred to in sub-guideline (1)(a) has given oral authorisation for the administration of the medication to the child and, within 7 days after the oral authorisation was given, confirms that authorisation in writing.

Division 5 – First Aid and Emergency Care

31. *First aid*

- (1) Every effort should be made to ensure that at least one of the rostered parent/carers has appropriate first aid training.
- (2) The playgroup must supply and maintain a suitably equipped First Aid kit at the playgroup and ensure that it is -
 - (a) easily recognisable and readily accessible to rostered parents/carers; and
 - (b) inaccessible to children.

32. *Sick or injured child*

- (1) If a child becomes ill, has an accident or is injured or traumatised as a consequence of an incident while at the playgroup the coordinator must ensure that the parent or guardian with whom the child resides is notified as soon as practicable.
- (2) If necessary in the interests of the health, safety or well being of the child referred to in sub-guideline (1) or the other children attending the playgroup, the coordinator must ensure that arrangements are made for the child to be removed from the playgroup as soon as practicable.

33. *Notification of infectious disease*

If there is an occurrence at a playgroup of an infectious disease listed in Schedule 5 to the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1991, the coordinator must ensure that all parents or guardians of all children are notified as soon as practicable of the occurrence.

PART 8 – FACILITIES

Division 1 – Rooms and Areas

34. *Children's rooms*

The playgroup must provide -

- (a) a clean, safe area for the children;
- (b) a play area that allows a clear space of at least 3.3 square metres for each child;
- (c) a fence or barrier to enclose any outdoor space;
- (d) the fence or barrier is at least 1.5 metres high measured from ground level; and
- (e) a child attending the playgroup cannot go through, over or under the fence or barrier or any gate or fitting.

Division 2 –Toilet and Washing Facilities

35. *Use of adult toilets and hand basins*

- (1) If the playgroup makes use of existing adult toilets, the coordinator must ensure that-
 - (a) the toilets are fitted with removable seats suitable for children and with wide and stable steps in front; and
 - (b) a rostered parents/carers or paid employee accompanies, supervises and assists children using the toilets.
- (2) If the playgroup makes use of existing adult hand basins, the coordinator must ensure that-
 - (a) a wide and stable step is provided; and
 - (b) a rostered parent/carer or paid employee accompanies, supervises and assists children using the hand basins.

Division 3 – Other Requirements

36. *Facilities for nappy changing*

If children under 3 years of age are at playgroup the coordinator must ensure that facilities are provided for changing nappies in a safe and hygienic manner.

37. *Requirements for food preparation*

- (1) The coordinator must ensure that if food is provided to children at a roster playgroup whether or not that food is supplied by the playgroup -
 - (a) the food is offered to children at frequent and regular intervals;
 - (b) cleanliness is observed where the food is stored, handled and prepared on the premises;
 - (c) all food on the premises intended for consumption is protected at all times from contamination;
 - (d) there are suitable eating arrangements for children at the playgroup.
- (2) In this guideline, ‘food’ includes beverage.

38. *Checklists for the development of policies and procedures*

Checklists for the development of policies and procedures are available in the *Playgroup Manual*.