LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

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What is play?

Play definition

Play is an essential part of every child’s life and vital to the processes of human development. It provides the mechanism for children to explore the world around them and the medium through which skills are developed and practised. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development, and acquiring social and behavioural skills.

Play is a generic term for a variety of activities which are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and may be freely chosen by the child. The activities may involve equipment or they may not, be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, be done with other people or on ones own, have an end product or not, be light hearted or very serious.

Every child needs to play and has a right to play, but opportunities to play are often limited by external factors – discrimination, the effects of disability and special needs, insufficient space and other environmental factors, and poverty and other social conditions. Play services are the means by which new opportunities for play are created.

Play based learning

Play is a process

Young children are at the stage of development where they learn by doing. It’s the doing that matters to a child and contributes to his or her learning. It is not the product to take home that is important. For example playing in the sandpit may involve feeling different textures, mixing water to make sand stick together. As children sift, dig, pour and carry they learn how to use their bodies. Both fine and gross motor skills are being used.

Decorating a sand castle with a collage of shells, stones, leaves, flowers and gumnuts, children learn about different concepts such as problem solving, counting, putting things in order and sorting.

Play is for everyone

It is the right of each child to have an equal opportunity to join in play at playgroup free from discrimination on the grounds of disability, culture, special needs, poverty, gender, social or environmental restraints.

Play needs space

Play spaces that facilitate learning and skill development are safe, offer opportunities for creativity, are age and stage appropriate, and are appealing and welcoming to the child. Give children freedom to move in an area that is not overcrowded with other children nor cluttered with toys and equipment.

Play takes time

Set aside as much time as possible for play. This allows children to progress through stages of sensory exploration, constructive and creative use of materials. Don’t rush children from activity to activity. Be flexible with your playgroup program.

Play involves taking risks

Small children learn by imitating their peers or older children. Each new skill is gained by trying something new and taking a risk. Keep a balance between safety and risk taking at playgroup.

What play is based on for each child

Interest

Observe your child at playgroup and see which activities they most frequently enjoy. Be sure your child’s interests are met. Repeat their favourite activity often to help them extend their concentration, knowledge and skills.

Free choice

Let children play independently to choose what they prefer to do, challenge themselves and be creative. At playgroup the role of the adult is to provide a range of play experiences, then support the child’s choice by being nearby, offering practical and verbal help if needed.

Self-determination

Allow each child to set the direction and pace of their own play with minimal adult guidance or assistance.

Preference

When play is done for its own sake it builds self esteem and is satisfying, pleasurable and good fun.
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Open ended play

Open ended, free or unstructured play has no:
• predetermined result
• pressure to finish or complete something to an adult standard
• model to copy
• steps to follow.

Children are free to think creatively and get satisfaction from doing things their own way and using their own ideas. They decide how to start, what direction to take, how to solve problems along the way and when they are finished.

Open-ended play is about exploring, experimenting, discovering and creating.

Play in itself is not specifically goal orientated. If adults concentrate on teaching and aim for an end product, play is robbed of its life and freedom.

Adults can help by providing lots of opportunities and uninterrupted time for this type of play.

At playgroup open-ended play materials include: paint, playdough, clay, blocks, construction sets, balls, home corner, dress-ups, wheeled toys, boxes, sand and water play.

Open-ended art and craft activities give children the opportunity to explore and experiment with the mediums of their own choice. They can be imaginative and innovative and create a unique piece of work and say, “I did it all by myself”.

Develop creatively

You don’t have to come up with new craft ideas every week at playgroup. Children love repetition. They acquire and develop skills through continual practice. Adults help maintain interest in open-ended activities by making slight variations such as setting up in different ways, sometimes inside, sometimes outside.

Set up on a table top, on the floor or on a blanket under a tree.

Change colour, recipes, shapes and textures to create new interest. Mix and match activities like making a tunnel from a large box to push or ride wheeled toys through. Add a different piece of play equipment like some bats to the balls or teapots to the home corner.

Develop the mind

Using an open ended approach helps develop an inquiring mind that is able to solve problems and negotiate with others. Ask open ended questions that are thought provoking and can’t be answered with a yes or no such as, “What would happen if…?”, “How do you think you can fix this?”, “How do the clouds stay in the sky?”, “Which one do you like better?”, or “Why is that?”

Accept answers without judgement. This encourages the child to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions without fear of judgement and being wrong.

This type of question and response:
• focuses on what the child is doing
• encourages children to think and respond
• values their opinions and ideas
• develops language skills
• develops imagination and a sense of wonder
• develops sequential thinking and problem solving skills.

Setting up open ended play

While open ended play is spontaneous it takes careful thought and planning to be effective. To encourage open ended play:
• observe children to know their interests and abilities
• put out appropriate open ended play equipment that invites children to play
• give freedom to children to choose and set the direction of their own play
• be flexible with the program to allow children time to develop their play
• be available with ideas and resources that will extend the play.

Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try to substitute ours for theirs.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Indoor play

Setting the scene

Setting up your playgroup room requires special consideration as babies and young children are at different ages and stages of development. All children need to be able to freely move around a play room and confidently play in a hazard and danger free environment.

Ask parents to dress their children for play; inappropriate clothing may limit their ability to be fully involved in the play.

Carefully setting up will affect how children play and can help minimise accidents and conflict.

The playgroup environment will need to be attractive and interesting to children, with plenty of opportunities for them to explore, experiment, develop their ideas and be creative.

As each child finishes an activity the supervising adult will need to be ready to reorganise the space to make it ready for the next child.

Things to set up

- Simple experiences at children’s level
- Several open ended play experiences such as dough, clay, painting, collage, drawing and pretend play
- Opportunities for children to experiment, explore and use situations and materials their own way
- Ample materials, play spaces and choices for each child e.g. if there are four chairs at a playdough table, you will need four lumps of dough, four rolling pins and four sets of cutters
- A special, safe, play space on the floor for babies
- Chairs or cushions on the floor for adults to sit on when they supervise or play with children
- Furniture or partitions so there are no long corridors that invite running indoors
- Separated, defined play areas where possible
- Play that creates a mess in an area that can be easily washed down or on a large tarpaulin spread out to protect the floor. Have smocks, hand towels and water available
- Busy and quiet areas where children can play alone or in groups

Things to avoid

- Tricycles or similar equipment indoors which may disrupt other children’s play or harm small children
- Clutter caused by too many toys and choices that over-stimulate or confuse children
- Insufficient materials, sharing and waiting breaks the flow of play can lead to frustration and disinterest
- Background music that increases noise levels and can distract and overstimulate children
- Play that requires hours of preparation or tiring clean up for adults

Other considerations

- Involve children in choosing and setting up activities.
- Plan activities for fun and pleasure.
- Allow uninterrupted time for play.
- Include all children irrespective of age or abilities.
- Develop each child’s interests.
- Cater for each child’s developmental stage.
- Supervise children for safety and fair play.
- Be culturally relevant to all families in your playgroup.
- Treat boys and girls equally.
- Discourage competition.
- Encourage exploration and experimentation.
- Have reasonable expectations about tidiness and mess.
- Plan simple, enjoyable sessions.

Things to include for adults

- Time to play with their child
- Time for adult socialising and conversation
- Opportunities to share and contribute
- Times to discuss and make decisions about the play program
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Outdoor play

Natural play spaces give children the opportunity to experience seasonal changes, to feel, touch, smell, hear natural elements and interact with them. Help children to appreciate and take responsibility for their natural environment.

Most, if not all play can be either indoors or outdoors. Traditional indoor play activities like puzzles, playdough or drawing can be enjoyed outdoors and with a little planning sand, water and ball play can be fun indoors.

When creating outdoor play spaces for children at playgroup the principles are similar to ‘Indoor play’ on the previous page. Also consider:

- playground safety and security
- being dressed for the weather
- individual interests and abilities
- giving children freedom to create their own play with sand, water, cubbies, balls, wheeled toys, large cardboard boxes
- opportunities for physical exercises like running, climbing, lifting, carrying, balancing.

Establishing an outdoor play area

Spaces for play
Planning effective and efficient outdoor play spaces adds to the quality and variety of outdoor play. Set spaces that provide for:

- challenging activities such as balancing, climbing, tunnelling, swinging
- running, ball games, chasing bubbles, pushing or pulling, spinning or riding wheeled toys
- sensory play with sand, mud, water, pebbles, stones, plants and flowers
- hiding away, high observation places, cubby house building, picnic places
- meandering, observing, watching a snail, ants or a butterfly
- a small bench for being alone or with a friend
- meeting as a group for songs or a story
- pretend work such as building dams, washing clothes, building roads
- imaginative play with dolls, jungle animals, insects, blocks.

Safety
See ‘Hunt for hazards’ and ‘Control hazards’ on pages 63 and 64. Ask the owners of your playgroup buildings to remove any leftover building materials that may be in the play area, or arrange a working bee to keep lawns short. Clear away any rubbish that may attract snakes, spiders or wasps.

Fencing
Enclose the entire outdoor area with fencing that children cannot climb over, go through or get under. Have a self-closing, self-locking, childproof gate.

Storage
Some outdoor equipment is large and may need to be stored in a shed. It is a good idea when installing a cubby house or fort to include a storage area underneath for bikes, tricycles and wheeled toys.

Shade
If there are no naturally shaded areas, hang tarpaulins or install shade cloth over areas where children frequently play. See ‘SunSmart’ on page 73.

Sheltered area
A pergola with a roof, attached to an outdoor wall, gives children a place to play outdoors even when it is raining. It makes a great area for painting and other activities that make a mess.

Fixed equipment
If you choose to install fixed equipment such as swings, slides, forts, cubby houses or climbing bars, first check the Australian standards for playground equipment. Have the right soft fall material under each piece of equipment. See ‘Soft fall under surfacing’ on page 69.

Weigh up the benefits of installing fixed equipment against the cost of buying smaller movable pieces that can be used both indoors and outdoors.

Fixed equipment is often very expensive and seldom used. If your playground has fixed or unsuitable equipment change the way it is used by adding blankets, boxes, wooden cable reels or other attachable items.

Sandpit
Playing in the sandpit is the most popular outdoor experience at playgroup. Build a sandpit in a well-drained position that has sun and rain to sterilise the
sand. Cover the sand with shade cloth or other porous material when not in use to prevent animals, particularly cats, fouling it.

**Natural areas**
Removal any poisonous or highly allergenic plants.
Develop a garden by planting flowers or vegetables.
Partition off a small area for a digging patch and add water for mud play. Have a bird bath and observe nature’s visitors.

**Bike path**
A safe, circular bike path or defined wheeled toy area will prevent wheeled play interfering with other children’s outdoor exploration.

Be safe outdoors. See ‘Playground safety’ on page 69.

**Social play**
Some parents worry because their child doesn’t play with other children. Play in a social context progresses as the child grows, develops and becomes familiar with routines, expectations and the people around them.

Some children learn by standing apart and watching other children play. All children progress through the following stages of playing:

- alone, absorbed in what they are doing
- alongside one another without interacting
- together at the same activity but each playing their own way, with little organisation or group goals
- cooperatively with other children in a more complex, organised way with common goals and rules and perhaps one or two children directing the play.
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Play and the home environment

From birth, babies play and use all their developing senses to explore their new world and they do most of this at home with family.

Playgroup Victoria recognises and highly values parents as children's first and most enduring educators and the crucial role the home environment plays in providing early play experiences.

There is a growing awareness that the importance of unstructured free play experiences in early childhood are linked to a child's optimal physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

_In the midst of this growing public awareness comes compelling new scientific evidence about play – evidence that play "sculpts" the brain in unique ways – play not only promotes optimal development, but also builds resilience and reduces stress._

Jane Hewes Early Childhood Chair, MacEwan College, Edmonton, Canada

This section has been proved to help you enrich play times at playgroup and at home.

Share the link to the member’s section on www.playgroup.org.au or photocopy relevant information and hand it out at playgroup and talk about it and how the ideas can benefits children at playgroup and at home.

At playgroup

- Watch what your child enjoys and include this in their home play.
- Buy gifts for your child to extend their favourite playgroup play experiences.
- Observe which learning style your child prefers and build this into daily and family routines.

At home

- Set up a special play space at home indoors and outdoors.
- Rotate toys and equipment according to your child’s current interest.
- Give your child plenty of time to play alone, with friends and with the family.
- Invite playgroup friends home to play
- Encourage your child to repeat and practise new skills they learn at playgroup.
- Take time to chat about what happened at playgroup.
- Ask thought provoking questions.
- Reinforce at home what your child is learning at playgroup about safety, healthy foods, healthy choices and being SunSmart.
- Regularly make time to have fun playing as a family. Read books, sing and dance to favourite music, tell stories, go on a train ride, visit the beach, zoo or wildlife sanctuary.
- Use travel time to sing playgroup songs, retell stories or play simple games like spot the taxi, bus, etc.

In your community

Find out what's happening in your local community. Visit your council's website and look for children's and family services or phone and ask. Join the local library, toy library or visit local parks and other places of interest. Look for information about local festivals in local papers or on community notice boards.

For more information

- Read the Playgroup Victoria member magazine Totline.
- Subscribe to ePlaygroup News at www.playgroup.org.au.
- Download A-Z playsheets from the member’s section at www.playgroup.org.au.
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Baby play

From the time a baby is born everything he sees, touches and does arouses curiosity and a desire to learn.

Playgroups support this learning. Babies love being part of the busyness at playgroup and are often mesmerised watching and interacting with other children. New babies are best left safely in a pram or held by their parent.

Older babies will busily examine everything around them, learning by seeing, touching, tasting, feeling and hearing. They explore and experiment to discover new information. New skills are mastered through practise and repetition.

At playgroup, you can help by understanding the way babies learn and providing a variety of play experiences.

Create a safe place for babies to play in your playgroup room out of the main traffic flow. Put a large rug on the floor or grass outside and add some baby toys.

Popular baby toys

- Soft blocks or balls
- Rattles
- Activity centres
- Safety mirrors
- Mobiles
- Commercial or homemade baby mats
- Prams, cots or ‘A’ frame baby gyms
- Soft toys
- Bead frames
- Books
- Containers or plastic ware
- All these toys in a box, bag or basket for older babies to unpack and pack

Safety

When offering toys to a baby avoid:

- anything sharp or broken
- anything smaller than a film canister
- detachable or small parts like buttons and eyes
- cords longer than 10cm
- toxic paints or plastics.

Quiet play

Play is not always busy; it can be restful and soothing. Quiet reflective play is as important to your child’s wellbeing as times of social and physically active play. Give babies time to lie on their backs to stretch, kick and develop hand skills or on their tummy to strengthen back, neck, shoulder and arm muscles and to practice head control.

If a baby becomes unsettled at playgroup the parent can share a book, sing lullabies or take the baby to where children are playing.

Music

Gather a few babies and parents together and sing or chant simple nursery rhymes like, Humpty Dumpty. Add finger movements as you sing Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, or put actions to Row, Row, Row your Boat. Play games like Peek-a-Boo or touching games such as Round and Round the Garden. Play different styles of music. Put shakers, rattles and musical toys with the baby toys.

Babies are active learners

Their toy play develops through the following stages:

- watching objects
- following moving objects with their eyes
- reaching out
- taking hold of an object
- examining it with eyes and hands
- squeezing and patting with hands
- passing the toy from hand to hand
- putting it to their mouth to explore it by sucking, biting or chewing
- dropping it to watch it fall
- banging toys together.

It is not necessary to buy expensive toys. Put together a container of safe colourful objects from around the home. You could even try making things for babies to play with.
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Toys and equipment

Basic toys and play equipment for playgroups

- A variety of balls, small bats
- Interlocking or wooden blocks, construction sets (at least 20 large pieces)
- Washable dolls, doll’s bed and bedding
- Baby toys, rattles, soft toys, washable or cardboard books
- Large crayons, paste and paint brushes, non spill paint pots, blunt ended scissors
- Puzzles
- Sets of animals, cars, trains, musical instruments, tea sets, cooking sets
- Buckets, spades, scoops, dump trucks and graders for the sandpit or digging patch
- Push or pedal wheeled toys such as tricycles, walker wagons, pull along toys, dolls’ prams, wheelbarrows
- Floor rugs, play mats
- Tarpaulins or sheets of strong plastic to protect floor from messy play activities
- Storage boxes
- Furniture for small children

Ten questions to ask when choosing toys for playgroup

1. Will it withstand constant, heavy use?
2. Is it safe for all children or will it need to be used in a restricted area?
3. Can it be easily cleaned?
4. Is it appropriate to the children’s abilities?
5. Does it encourage social interaction or is it used individually?
6. Is it simple and able to be used by children of different ages?
7. Does it give the opportunity to develop and practise new skills?
8. Does it have scope for imagination and experimentation?
9. Is it in line with the interests of this group of children?
10. What is its value – does it entertain, encourage physical play, foster creativity or is it a tool for imaginative play?

Take into account individual differences. The aptitude, personality and interests of a child will determine which toys he or she prefers. Toys that fascinate one child may be of no interest to another.

Recycled materials for play

- Cartons and boxes become building blocks, cubbies, cars, boats, a doll’s bassinette, containers for packing and emptying, tunnels for crawling through, a surface for painting
- Plastic drink containers can be used for filling and emptying with water or sand, shakers for music, cut down to make funnels and scoops
- Ice-cream container lids can be used for stencils
- Coloured lids can be sorted or threaded into a baby’s rattle
- Tyres (not steel belted) can be stacked, rolled, cut in half for water or sand play, used as a swing or in an obstacle course
- Paper off-cuts, old posters can be used for tearing, drawing, painting, cutting and pasting
- Dresses, skirts, shirts, ties, waistcoats, cameras, bags, belts, scarves for dress ups for pretend and role play
- Cardboard cylinders for telescopes or flutes.

Find out more
Reverse Art Truck at two locations, 17 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood, 9879 1264 and the rear of Casey Indoor Leisure Complex, suite 15, 65 Berwick Cranbourne Road Cranbourne, 5995 3168 or visit www.reverse-art-truck.zoomshare.com.
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Parent’s role in play

Parents and play

Children laugh as a dad plays rough and tumble with some toddlers. A few parents exchange ideas over a cup of coffee. A grandmother cuddles a baby as she points to the pictures in a book. A young mum pushes her child on a swing. These are common scenes at playgroup.

Closer observation will show that the role of adults in children’s play falls into five distinct styles.

1. Planner
   This adult observes the child at play and determines their interests and abilities. They plan intentional play experiences to support and extend the child's holistic development based on the child's preferences, values and abilities. Every opportunity is taken to involve the child in the planning process.

2. Director
   This adult organises the play and directs the child. They will take the child to the activity, show the child how and what to do and stay close by to monitor the child's progress.

3. Facilitator
   This adult centres their attention more on the child than on the play. The child is encouraged to choose the activity and play independently while the adult stands back without getting involved. The adult is an encouraging and supportive resource person who attends to requests for assistance from the child.

4. Partner
   This adult plays with the child as an equal. Sometimes the adult and sometimes the child initiate and choose the play direction. The adult and child negotiate about ideas and leadership. The adult becomes a playmate in the real sense, neither dominating nor encouraging, but actively joining in the play.

5. Observer
   This adult gives the child freedom to play alone with little or no interaction. The adult allows time and space for the child to play independently. Children create their own play opportunities and socialise freely with other children and adults.

A balanced mix of the five styles in a playgroup session is ideal. Each style has its advantages and disadvantages.

Plan time for adults to chat and enjoy friendships. This is an important part of the playgroup experience. Playgroups are not just about children’s play.

Supervision

Make sure when a family starts at your playgroup they understand that they are responsible for supervising each child they bring. It is not the responsibility of the coordinator or session leader. Supervision at playgroup is about duty of care, behaviour guidance, safety and fair play that is fun for everyone.

Inappropriate behaviour that hurts other people or disrupts another child's play needs to be handled by the parent or caregiver so that the child learns to interact within acceptable limits.

At the most basic level, supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards, however adequate supervision occurs when each child is being observed constantly, actively and diligently by the adults in the playgroup.

As adults supervise they observe their child and learn how their child plays and relates in a group setting. By being on hand they are available to guide and support their child's play.

Essentials of supervision

Be sure everyone understands that no baby, child or group of children may be left unsupervised in a car, room or outdoors.

Children must be taken, not sent, to the bathroom. Potential danger areas such as the kitchen, storeroom or offices need barriers to keep children safe.

When a parent or caregiver is on a rostered duty they need to make arrangements with another playgroup member to supervise their child.

Children who are in danger or in conflict need to be removed from the situation by the nearest adult and taken to their parent or caregiver.

Adapt the level of supervision to the circumstance. When there is potential danger such as swings, water play, scissors or climbing equipment, the adult's full attention is necessary. Visual contact and being close by may be adequate in the home corner or sandpit.
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Multiple Intelligences

A relatively new theory of learning suggests there are multiple intelligences in different areas of the brain. Human beings have all the multiple intelligences, but each person has their own unique combination. This theory broadens the perspective of a single intelligence that is given a score according to an I.Q. test.

Many schools now apply the multiple intelligences concepts in their classrooms. Playgroups can also benefit by incorporating this theory to their planning and setting up for play.

Multiple intelligences – a simple definition

- **Linguistic** the intelligence of words
- **Musical** the organisation of sounds and rhythms
- **Logical/mathematical** exploring objects and what they do
- **Spatial** pictures, patterns and images
- **Bodily/kinaesthetic** the skilful use of our physical body
- **Interpersonal** social relationships
- **Intrapersonal** self knowledge
- **Naturalist** learning from nature

Most people display competencies in each of the intelligences but have greater strengths and talents in two or three.

For playgroup parents and caregivers working together to make their play program valuable for babies, toddlers and preschool children’s growth and development, the multiple intelligences theory helps when planning, choosing equipment and respecting each child’s uniqueness.

Planning

The multiple intelligences theory simplifies planning playgroup activities. It shows how children learn and gives a blueprint for the type of activities that nurture each child’s interests and innate love of learning.

Consider all the multiple intelligences when you plan your play program and set up toys and equipment. When you put out activities to cover all the intelligences and allow children to be self-directed they can both develop and apply their learning within their preferred method and have a chance to try different ways of learning.

Choosing equipment

Getting together playgroup toys and equipment is simplified because there is a checklist to ensure you are providing a balance of experiences. Try to have at least one playgroup activity for each intelligence. Many play experiences incorporate several intelligences and some cover all the intelligences.

Respecting each child’s uniqueness

Knowing the multiple intelligences means you can be more understanding of children’s preferences in play. You are more relaxed if some children want to be outside most of their time while others want to explore or create indoors. You have greater understanding of a child who wants to be alone while others prefer to play in groups.

On the following pages there are some basic activities that nurture each intelligence, keeping in mind that the multiple intelligences interweave in complex ways and that children bring to all the intelligences their fun loving playfulness, unique personality, vivid curiosity, vivid imagination, endless creativity, exceptional wisdom, inventiveness and vitality.

Here is a P-L-A-Y-G-R-O-U-P acrostic you can easily apply to check that all the intelligences are being covered and you are catering for each child’s individual learning preferences.

Ask yourself. Did my child….

P – have plenty of **physical** activities
L – use and hear **language**
A – have time to explore, **analyse**, think and reason
Y – have space to be alone, by **yourself**
G – have **group** time with one, two or more friends
R – enjoy **rhythms** and music
OU – spend time **outdoors** exploring nature or bring nature indoors
P – **picture** and imagine then create or construct?

Above all, was playgroup fun?

If the answers are “Yes” you can be assured that your playgroup is providing plenty of opportunities for learning through play.
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Linguistic

Linguistic intelligence is being able to use words effectively.

At playgroup create an environment that is vibrant in words and language. Encourage conversations, negotiations and discussions. Ask questions and introduce new vocabulary. Chat together about playgroup routines, talk about what's happening and what is about to happen. Recall events and talk about the sequence in which things happen.

Read books, sing songs, enjoy poetry, tell stories or chant rhymes.

Developmental importance

Linguistic activities encourage children to:

- express thoughts, ideas and emotions
- learn that pictures tell stories
- learn to concentrate, remember and understand new words and ideas
- develop an appreciation of books
- increase attention and concentration
- build confidence to participate and communicate
- develop the ability to express their own ideas
- develop the ability to discuss, negotiate and be assertive
- develop new interests
- express feelings through verbal and non-verbal communications
- add new words to their vocabulary
- understand that their thoughts, ideas and stories can be expressed in pictures, words and symbols
- increase verbal communications
- use information from books
- gain confidence to ask questions
- appreciate language and stories from different cultures
- play with nonsense words and rhymes
- begin to use the intonations of their language
- explore patterns and rhythms of words and language.

Basic equipment

Story books, picture books, nursery rhyme books, song cards, laminated pictures, photo albums, playgroup made books, charts, story book CDs, CD player, sequence cards, story cards, puppets, phones, mail box, letters, paper crayons, simple board or card games for older children, sets of toys that encourage cooperative play i.e. dolls houses, train sets with floor mat, cubby houses, water play troughs, floor puzzles, role play sets, group paintings, collage, felt boards and pictures, sound puzzles/books, microphone

Popular linguistic activities

- Set up a comfortable library space with engaging books that are easily accessible to children.
- Read stories and converse using languages that may be spoken by families in the playgroup.
- Read and tell stories.
- Use words in songs, rhymes and chants.
- Explain new words.
- Make up stories as children play. Encourage them to make up their own stories.
- Have plenty of picture books.
- Laminate some pictures of particular interest and talk about them with the children.
- Use verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Read traditional and cultural stories appropriate to playgroup families.
- Enjoy nonsense rhymes and made up words.
- Use finger and hand puppets to encourage conversations.
- Role play talking on the phone.
- Play post office, scribble letters, put them in envelopes and mail them.
- Go on an excursion; follow up by making a photo album with captions and children's names.
- Make a poster about each child with photos and short captions about their interests.
- Chat as a child plays.
- Ask open-ended questions.
Musical intelligence is the reaction to and manipulation of rhythm, timbre and tone of musical sounds.

All children, even tiny babies, respond to music. At playgroup music can be introduced spontaneously or everyone can get together for a group music session.

**Developmental importance**

Musical activities encourage children to:

- acquire a love of music
- learn the basic elements of music: fast and slow, loud and soft, high and low
- experiment with sounds and melodies
- develop listening skills
- express emotions, follow directions and cooperate
- improve language, speech and memory
- enjoy an energetic time of dancing, marching or freely moving to music, exploring space
- gain confidence and body awareness
- have enriched story times and imaginative play
- develop creativity through expressive movement or making up their own songs
- learn about and use musical instruments
- build a repertoire of songs.

Music can be used to set the mood of your playgroup session – lively music to brighten everybody up, gentle music to calm them down. Expose children to different styles of music particularly relevant to your playgroup families. You don’t need to be musically talented to share and enjoy music at playgroup. Spontaneously start singing to the children and forget your inhibitions.

Try a group music session. They work best if all parents and caregivers join in and babies are included. Allow children to join in as they are ready. Some will prefer to stand back and observe for a few weeks.

**Basic music equipment**

Make up a music kit for your playgroup. Have both good quality and home made instruments: maracas, castanets, drums, bells, shakers, tambourines, rhythm sticks, xylophones, cymbals, rain sticks and blocks. Avoid blowing instruments at playgroup because of the risk of cross infection.

Add streamers, scarves, floating material, dress ups, tutus or leis for dancing. Include a toy microphone, puppets, soft toys, song cards, parachute, a variety of recorded music, wind chimes and commercial musical baby toys.

**Popular musical activities**

**Singing**

- Sing songs with actions, finger play, clapping or songs that include the children’s names, circle songs or games.
- Make a CD compilation tape or song cards of the group’s favourite songs and rhyme.
- Gather together for a farewell song.
- Use finger puppets or hand puppets to sing along or introduce a song.
- Play parachute games to music or singing.

**Dancing to music**

- Move in time to music: dance, clap, march, jump, stamp feet, nod the head.
- Wave streamers, scarves or pieces of floating material to different styles of music.
- Dress up, put on some face paint or adhesive coloured stars and sing or dance to the beat.
- On special occasions play music to set an atmosphere for children as they blow bubbles, manipulate playdough, draw with crayons or finger paint.
- Play gentle music and ask children to lie down and relax.

**Listening**

- Draw children’s attention to the musical sounds and rhythms around them: of a phone ringing, birds singing, car horn blowing.
- Put out musical toys, mobiles and wind chimes.
- Attend a children’s concert.

**Instruments**

- Make musical instruments like a simple shaker, tambourine, rhythm sticks or drum.
- Play music or sing songs with a definite beat and let them play along.
- Add variety by encouraging the children to make their shakers go fast and slow or loud and soft.
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Logical/Mathematical

Logical/mathematical intelligence is about concepts, numbers and logical thinking.

Babies and toddlers explore their world with the curiosity of a scientist. They observe, touch, taste, smell and listen to test the properties of any object in reach.

Concepts are formed as they arrange and rearrange, predict, classify, group things into sets, discover sequences, make patterns and solve problems.

Through play children discover cause and effect and how objects behave under certain circumstances. They learn that objects exist even when out of sight.

As they gain language skills they express these concepts in words like ‘more’ or ‘less’, ‘empty’ or ‘full’. Counting becomes a game that can be reinforced through songs and rhymes.

Through pretend play, sometimes referred to as symbolic play, children learn that a symbol can represent or resemble an object e.g. two candles or the number two on a birthday cake or card represents being two years old.

Developmental importance

Logical/mathematical activities encourage children to:

- be innovative and curious
- learn the relationship between cause and effect
- explore and experiment through their five senses
- acquire knowledge by figuring it out for themselves
- develop a love of learning through discovery
- learn about how objects behave under different circumstances
- develop concepts about their environment
- solve their own problems creatively
- think logically
- be confident to predict and estimate
- recognise, compare, sort and classify shapes and objects
- put objects in sets and match one-to-one
- create and use symbols
- have a positive self-esteem through satisfaction and achievement
- develop number concepts and understand counting.

Basic equipment

- Soft or wooden blocks with cube and other shapes
- Bead frames, peg boards, stacking rings, threading, posting or sorting boxes
- Jack-in-the-box, simple matching games, construction toys, train sets with interlocking tracks
- Sets of cars, trucks, farm animals, 200 animals, dinosaurs, sea creatures, soft toys or people
- Birthday cake with candles
- Picture dominoes, simple lotto games
- Clocks, phone or cash register, balance scales
- Different sized containers for water play, buckets for sand play, shapes for playdough
- Cardboard boxes
- Tea sets and sturdy plastic cutlery sets, magnetic fishing game
- Basic electronic toys
- Balls and bean bags
- Basic wooden puzzles or floor puzzles for shape recognition, arranging smallest to largest, counting, sequences, sorting, matching, measuring, classifying and logical thinking

Popular logical/mathematical activities

- Thread and create patterns with cotton reels, large beads or buttons
- Sort, pile, stack, order, count and knock down blocks or boxes
- Cut, stick, glue, assemble, build and construct with collage
- Design, rearrange, make choices and produce outcomes with sets of small toys
- Build with construction toys
- Explore, manipulate and discover cause and effect with a variety of toys
- Rearrange soft wooden or floor puzzles
- Play simple board or card games
- Discover the properties of water: full/empty, floating/sinking, wet/dry
- Discover the volume/shape of playdough
- Discover heavy/light, full/empty, concepts such as on, under, in sand play

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Spatial

This intelligence is picture orientated. It is about shapes and forms and being able to perceive and recreate aspects of the visual world accurately or abstractly.

When children paint, draw, design and construct two and three dimensional works of art, it is important to give them time to think about what they are going to create as they begin. Do not expect them to start straight away, give them time to decide for themselves. Making children copy preplanned models by adults does not encourage creativity and is likely to stifle children’s ideas.

Create familiar spaces at playgroup by putting out similar play experiences each week in the same place. This will help children to visualise how their body fits into these spaces and give them confidence in being able to find pathways independently to and from their favourite spaces.

Imaginative and fantasy play builds a child’s capacity to think in images and pictures.

Puzzles, blocks and construction toys help with distinguishing form and shapes.

Play with colours using paints, crayons, collage, light, shade, mirrors and shadows.

Playing outdoors and going on excursions gives children the opportunity to gain both long distance and close up perspectives. Draw children’s attention to distant visual experiences like clouds and aeroplanes to develop spatial concepts.

Developmental importance

Spatial activities encourage children to:

- discover shape, size, texture, quantity and consistency
- experience how materials and colours change when mixed together
- develop sensory awareness and have their sense of touch stimulated
- develop concentration and creativity
- express ideas, feelings and inner emotions
- learn how two and three dimensional pieces can fit together
- develop skills with cutting, drawing, collage, painting, stamping and constructing
- learn to express emotions using crayons, pencils, paint and colours
- use tools skilfully
- develop body awareness
- develop boundary awareness of themselves and objects in their environment
- develop concepts of balance and symmetry
- develop spatial awareness and avoid clumsiness.

Popular spatial activities and equipment

- Interlocking construction toys
- Measure, mix, make, mould, push, squeeze, roll and stretch playdough
- Make playdough and clay shapes with hands, simple tools or natural materials
- Paint with fingers, brushes or rollers
- Cut, tear, arrange and glue collage
- Draw with chalk, crayons or charcoal
- Stamp with blocks, vegetables, hands or feet
- Stack and build with soft wooden or plastic blocks
- Build shapes and objects with two and three dimensional construction sets
- Play with tunnels, cubbies, tents, cardboard boxes or swings
- Dress up in costumes, shoes, hats, ties and scarves
- Use mirrors
- Play with colour and colour mixing – cover windows, make glasses, telescope or binoculars with cellophane paper
- Observe patterns in a kaleidoscope
- Mix and match colours with paints and puzzles
- Screw and interlock large plastic nuts and bolts
- Match, identify and fit shapes in posting boxes
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH
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Bodily/Kinaesthetic

This physical intelligence is about children gaining confidence and control of their physical body.

Physical play comes so naturally to most small children that all we need to do at playgroup is provide safe open spaces and some basic equipment. Children will actively play using their bodies to run, throw, kick, ride, climb, tumble and balance. Have a carpeted open space for energetic play if children are unable to go outdoors.

This intelligence is not only about being able to control one’s body, it is also about self expression through bodily actions like dancing, mime, role play and imaginative play.

Bodily/kinaesthetic intelligence also involves being able to handle objects skilfully. At playgroup, children develop this skill by using both small and large play equipment. Wheeled toys, balls, hoops, slides and climbing frames are popular. Set up a simple obstacle course to encourage children to practise several skills. Developing smaller muscles is important. Drawing, threading, blocks, construction toys, small toys, cutting and pasting develop the fine motor skills and hand to eye coordination.

Developmental importance

Bodily/kinaesthetic activities encourage children to:

- develop fine and gross motor skills
- develop better body control, hand to eye coordination, spatial awareness and balance
- expend energy while developing strength, agility, stamina, coordination and balance
- develop physical fitness and wellbeing important for cognitive growth
- increase manipulative skills
- develop skills using tools, materials and equipment
- encourage a positive attitude to physical activity
- develop muscle tone
- physically express feelings and emotions.

Basic equipment and activities

- Tunnels – crawl, run, stoop
- Sandpit with spades, buckets, rakes – carry, lift, sit, crawl, fill/empty, push, pull
- Wheeled toys, prams, tricycles, wheelbarrows, pusher, ride-on walkers, wagons – push/pull, ride, pedal, carry
- Hoops – roll, jump in and out of, arrange
- Climbing frame – climb, swing, balance
- Jousting board – jump, balance, bounce
- Music – dance, wave, clap, stomp, jump, march, twist, turn, spin, skip, hop
- Tunnels, tents, cubbies, activity gyms, climbing frames – climb, crawl, hide, slide
- Parachute – lifting, stooping, upper arm and body strength
- Large building blocks – balance, coordination
- Hobby horses – gallop, run, balance
- Obstacle course set up for children to practise various types of active play
- Blocks, threading, jigsaws, puzzles, playdough, finger painting, pasting – for developing fine motor skills

- Balls, bean bags, bats – throw, kick, toss, roll, catch, bounce
- Slide – climb, slide, grip, step
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Interpersonal

This intelligence is the ability to respond appropriately to the moods, motivations and desires of others.

Adults often have high expectations of children and expect them to be able to play well and share with others. Very young children are not particularly adept at socialising as they do yet have the necessary skills such as sophisticated language, problem solving and the ability to sense what another person is feeling. Although adults can encourage playing together, it is important to let children find their own levels for interacting. It is quite normal for children to want to play alone or alongside others before they start to play together.

To develop this socially orientated intelligence at playgroup set up activities that encourage socialisation through one-to-one interactions, free play and small groups.

Use snack time, picnics, celebrations, group games and the need to share equipment to develop and model cooperative learning.

Draw children together by setting up a water trough, an attractive playdough table, a dramatic play experience or dress ups. This play invites and encourages children to play together and interact socially.

Adults are important facilitators. They require sensitivity to not to interrupt when children are cooperating well and give them freedom and time to develop their own social interactions and when appropriate, settle their own disputes.

Developmental importance

Interpersonal activities encourage social skills as children:

- learn to cooperate, follow directions, take turns, share and consider others
- develop verbal and non-verbal communication through contact with other children and adults
- make friends, increasing personal happiness and wellbeing
- learn necessary skills for group acceptance
- learn to trust adults other than parent/caregiver
- engage in play with other children
- understand others and accept themselves
- express feelings and ideas
- act out and try different roles, i.e. powerful roles
- develop positive attitudes to the opposite gender
- develop negotiating, problem solving and decision making skills
- have their rights respected and respect the rights of others
- respond appropriately to the needs of others
- learn peaceful ways to resolve conflict
- gain a sense of belonging and make a valuable contribution to a group
- display sympathy and empathy
- respect cultural and social diversity.

Basic equipment

- Table games
- Floor puzzles and games
- Group art work
- Sandpit
- Musical instruments, puppets and puppet theatre
- Home play: dolls, prams, tea sets, cooking sets, table and chairs, oven with cooking utensils, pots, pans, cake tins, baking trays, dress ups, cleaning and washing tools, phones, bean bags and baskets

Sets of toys for playing together

- Balls and ball games
- Large felt boards, large building blocks, tunnels
- Shops
- Parachute
- Dolls houses, sets of people, furniture
- Role play
- Large mats with cars, trucks, buses, street signs
- Trains, tracks, signs, people, stations
- Low play tables, water troughs, sand boxes
- Large Lego or building blocks to share

Popular interpersonal activities

- Music, group singing of songs and rhymes
- Free play, home corner
- Snack time
- Pretend play
- Simple table top activities
- Simple board or outdoor games
- House, shop, restaurant, hospital, post office
- Dressing up and cubbies
- Acting out stories and ideas
- Puppets, soft toys, small toy play
- Group painting and drawing
- Role playing and community roles: fireman, policeman, doctor, shopkeeper, hairdresser
- Bubble blowing and chasing
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to think and act independently to have positive self-image, self-discipline and self-esteem.

This intelligence is fostered by solitary play giving children time to plan and act independently. Develop concentration by setting up partitioned quiet spaces, cubbies or small secret places where a child is protected from other children intruding into their play. Encourage introspection and self-reflection by asking questions or discussing how a child is feeling. Evoke memories by chatting about past experiences. Build self-esteem by respecting and valuing each child’s individuality. Set up play to cater for individual interests and abilities. Encourage self-motivation by allowing each child to make choices and direct their own play. Support them by giving the help or equipment necessary to develop their ideas.

Often at playgroup a child needs a short time to be alone to relax away from the excitement and noise of the play. If a small child is upset be ready to give a hug of reassurance or words of encouragement to rebuild confidence. Build simple routines for children into your program. Encourage children to respect and act in accordance with routines such as packing up, washing hands, sitting down to eat.

Developmental importance

Intrapersonal activities encourage children to:

- make the choice to be alone
- enjoy solitary play
- determine their own play preferences
- be self-directed
- increase concentration
- follow their own interests
- work independently
- be self-paced, have realistic perception of their own abilities
- choose to take time to relax
- make decisions, choose their own materials and solve their own problems
- be responsible for their own play
- choose to take risks
- develop confidence in being alone

- take time to work out their own ideas
- develop their individuality and creativity
- work through positive and negative feelings
- have an acceptable outlet for anger, frustration, confusion or distress
- develop self-esteem and social skills
- develop an awareness of their own uniqueness and appreciate diversity
- have a positive attitude to their own gender, ethnicity and family background.

Basic equipment

Rugs, cushions, barriers to create quiet space, books, puzzles, drawing and painting equipment, single chair and table, electronic toys, self-correcting commercial toys, soft toys, individual puzzles, high places to stand and observe, tunnels, large boxes, cubbies and tents to hide away.

Popular intrapersonal activities

- Fantasy play, dress ups, role play
- Music activities
- Sandpit experiences or digging patch
- Painting, drawing
- Quiet corner of books, puppets
- Library corner
- Cubby houses
- Partitioned spaces
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Naturalist

The naturalist intelligence encourages children to interact and make sense of the natural and physical world about them.

Developmental importance
Naturalist activities encourage children to:
• learn to explore, appreciate and care for the natural environment
• discover their place and relationship to nature
• learn respect and care
• investigate, identify, classify and organise natural objects
• develop awareness of the physical and natural world
• discover scientific concepts such as temperature, life cycles and properties of natural objects
• have their curiosity and sense of wonder stimulated.

Model conserving resources
• Conserve water and energy.
• Avoid disposable materials and things that come in expensive packaging.
• Avoid using food as a play material.
• Compost your playgroup scraps.
• Make do with what can be recycled, reused or found in the environment.

One-off environment or nature days have little lasting value. Children will learn to be environmentally responsible if:
• all experiences in the playgroup setting reflect environmentally responsible attitudes
• adults act as responsible role models through actions and words
• children have plenty of time to explore nature and are encouraged to stop... look, collect, play, return.

Play experiences

Observe weather patterns
• Blow bubbles in the wind.
• Wash and dry dolls’ clothes in the sun.
• Collect rain water or hail.
• Play with shadows.
• Collect and classify autumn leaves by colour and shape.
• Collect spring flowers.
• Visit local parks to observe seasonal differences.

Outdoors
Take children outdoors during the playgroup session to discover the variety of textures, smells, colours, patterns and mysteries of nature. Demonstrate to children a sense of wonder and inquiry about living things. Explain how all living things make a unique contribution to the environment. Show children that respect may mean looking but not touching.

Indoors
Let your playgroup children, particularly babies, explore a range of materials, e.g. wood, material, wool, paper. There’s more to life than plastic!
Collect clusters of natural objects for children to make a temporary natural collage, sort, make patterns, match or simply make part of their play experiences. Try autumn leaves, empty snail shells, flowers, acorns, gum nuts, shells, seeds, feathers, sheep wool, driftwood, dried or fallen leaves, bark, pine cones, stones or pebbles.

These items need to be appropriate to the age of the children for safe play.
When natural materials are borrowed from the environment for use in play experiences ensure they are used constructively with respect for their intrinsic value, then returned to the environment.

Water play
Water is a crucial, natural resource, so encourage its responsible use. Use natural items in your water play like shells, pebbles or sea sponges. Add water to clay, sand and dirt for mud play.

Find out more
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Recipes

Flour recipes
When making playdough use Edicol to colour or leave it uncoloured. Make it at playgroup so the children can use it warm – lovely! Try different flours or add sand for a new texture.

Cooked playdough
2 cups plain flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoons cream of tartar
2 tablespoons oil
2 cups water
¼ teaspoon Edicol colour (optional)
Mix ingredients and cook gently, stirring constantly until thick. Allow to cool and knead until smooth. Store in an airtight container.

Because of its high salt content, this recipe is not recommended for small children who may eat playdough.

Microwave playdough
2 cups plain flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoons cream of tartar
1 tablespoon oil
2 cups water
¼ teaspoon Edicol colour (optional)
Mix all ingredients together in a large microwave dish. Cook three minutes on high then stir and cook for a further 2½ - 3½ minutes. Form into a ball and leave to cool for five minutes.

Stretchy playdough
Use the following recipe to make as large or small an amount as you want. It is great fun to make with the children at playgroup.

Use any measure e.g. container, cup, lid or spoon
2½ measures self raising flour
1 measure cold water
Mix together flour and water to make lovely stretchy dough. Add more flour if necessary. Colour with Edicol if you wish. For other sensory experiences add spice or essence.

Playgroup cakes
Give each child a spoon, margarine tub and patty pan case with their name underneath.
Preheat oven to 375ºF or 180ºC
Add to margarine tubs:
1 tablespoon self raising flour
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon soft margarine or butter
1 tablespoon pre-made milk and egg mixture (for 12 cakes add one egg to 150 mls milk)
Mix all ingredients and place in each child’s patty pan with their name written underneath.
Bake 10-15 minutes.

Cornflour
Salt free goop (uncooked)
375g cornflour
1 cup cold water
Place cornflour in a bowl and add water until it is the consistency of thick dough.
It is easy and fun to mix with your hands and brushes off clothes when dry.

Glue and paint
3 rounded tablespoons cornflour
3 tablespoons cold water to mix
500ml boiling water OR
Use any measure, e.g. container, cup, lid or spoon
1 measure cornflour
1 measure cold water to mix
3 measures boiling water to thicken
In a measuring jug mix cornflour with enough water to be just runny. Quickly add boiling water to the mixture to make 500mls stirring briskly until thick and smooth.
This can be used as a clear clag.
Add a teaspoon of Edicol for either a bright coloured glue or thick finger paint. Thin the coloured glue with a little water for painting with brushes.

Soap mixtures
Bubble pipe
1 drinking straw
1 plastic lid from a 2-litre milk or juice container
1 small square of towelling
1 elastic band
Burn a hole in the side of the lid with a hot skewer.
Insert straw, cover open end with a towelling square and attach the elastic band.

**Bubble mixture**
Add one teaspoon Morning Fresh liquid detergent to one cup of warm water. Thoroughly soak bubble pipe in mixture, remove and blow through straw.
Note: As a health precaution do not share bubble pipes. Make one for each child.

**Lux slime/finger painting**
This mixture will keep for many months in a plastic container.
The night before dissolve 1 cup Lux Flakes in 3 cups boiling water and stir until clear. Leave overnight.
Next morning the mixture will have a jelly like consistency. Whisk small amounts as needed.
Or, whisk thoroughly using an electric mixer for about five minutes until it is double in volume. Use as finger paint on a laminated tabletop or on paper. Colour if you wish with ¼ teaspoon of Edicol dye.

**Allergy warning**
Edicol dye is a strong powder dye available from art or educational equipment suppliers. It washes out in cold water. If your child is sensitive to food additives please exercise care. The following colourings are included in Edicol dyes, Yellow (102), Red (110,124), Blue (132), Green (102,133), Black (133,123,102), Brown (155,133, Orange (110).
This information is listed on the containers so that if you are aware of a particular intolerance you can avoid that colour.
LEARNING AND DEVELOPING THROUGH PLAY

Checklist

Is your weekly play program appropriate to the ages and stages of each child offering activities that support children's learning and development? Let this checklist help you to assess your play program.

☐ Play is planned to reflect the playgroup's philosophy and goals.

☐ The playgroup program encourages children and adults to socialise.

☐ Children are given the opportunity to make choices and take on new challenges.

☐ Parents/caregivers talk about the play program and evaluate it together.

☐ There are ample opportunities for children to repeat and practise skills.

☐ Children are encouraged to interact with nature and natural materials in a respectful way.

☐ The play program is balanced and developmentally appropriate.

☐ Play experiences are planned to reflect children's needs, abilities and interests.

☐ Play encourages fine and gross motor skill development.

☐ Play encourages creative development and aesthetic awareness.

☐ Play provides individual and group experiences.

☐ Play encourages intellectual development.

☐ Play encourages language development.

☐ Music is regularly included in the play program.

☐ Adequate time is given for open-ended play.

☐ Babies are well catered for.

☐ Toys are regularly cleaned and checked for safety.

☐ Dress-ups are washed regularly.

☐ Recycled materials are used where possible.

☐ The storage area is well labelled and well maintained.

☐ Competition between children or adults is discouraged.

☐ Plenty of time is given to child directed play.

☐ Children are given opportunities to explore and experiment with various media e.g. sand, water, playdough, toys with regular and irregular shapes, sounds and effects.

☐ Children are supported in their play by their parent/caregiver.

☐ The program is flexible and allows extra time to continue activities that are engaging children.

☐ Parents/caregivers are encouraged to dress their children appropriately.

☐ Home play activities reflect the cultures of families in playgroup.

☐ All children are able to participate in the play.

☐ A fair play culture exists where no child or adult is able to disrupt another child's play.

☐ Children are assisted to develop their skills, join in, share and take turns.

Photocopy this checklist. Tick items that your playgroup is achieving and cross ones that need attention. Encourage families to discuss results and voice any suggestions or concerns. Develop future plans and put them into action as soon as possible. Revisit this checklist annually.

Assessment date:

__________________________

Person responsible to follow through:

__________________________