A Short Guide to Running a

Sole Parent Playgroup



A sole parent playgroup is a supportive, community-based space where single parents and carers can come together with their children to connect, play and share experiences. These playgroups recognise the unique experiences and challenges of sole parenting, including managing parenting responsibilities independently, housing pressures and balancing work, study and wellbeing needs.

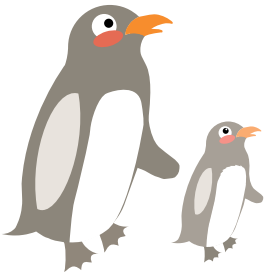
Sole parent playgroups provide opportunities to reduce isolation, build confidence and strengthen social and emotional wellbeing for both parents and children. They are open to all sole parents and carers, including single mothers, single fathers, kinship carers and guardians who are parenting without a co-parent in the household.

Playgroup Space

- Create a welcoming, calm, inclusive environment. Have a familiar face greet new families and avoid language that assumes a two-parent household.
- Where possible, include onsite support – a family support worker, community worker or MCH nurse for informal check-ins and referrals to housing, financial or mental health services.
- Choose an accessible, child-friendly space – near public transport or with free parking, since cost and travel time can be a barrier.
- Favour a community or family service setting over a formal venue – it feels less intimidating and lowers barriers to attendance.
- Ensure access to change tables, a private feeding area, pram access and kitchen facilities so a solo parent can manage without a second pair of hands.
- Display inclusive imagery reflecting diverse family structures, so attendees see themselves represented.
- Use gender-neutral signage and language – Sign could read “Welcome Families!” rather than “Mum and Me.”

Toys, Resources and Activities

- Encourage shared parent-child focused activities so that a parent with multiple children can engage with each.
- Let parents engage at their own comfort level – energy and circumstances vary, especially without a second adult.
- Provide age-appropriate toys, with duplicates of popular items where possible.
- Offer simple, low-pressure activities such as sensory play, art, music, storytelling and outdoor play with little to set-up or clean-up involved.
- Balance structured activities with free play, since parents may be managing children of different ages at once.



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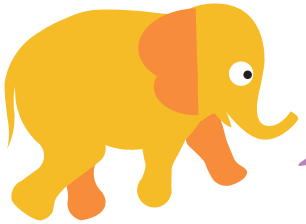
Sole Parent Playgroup

Engagement and Support

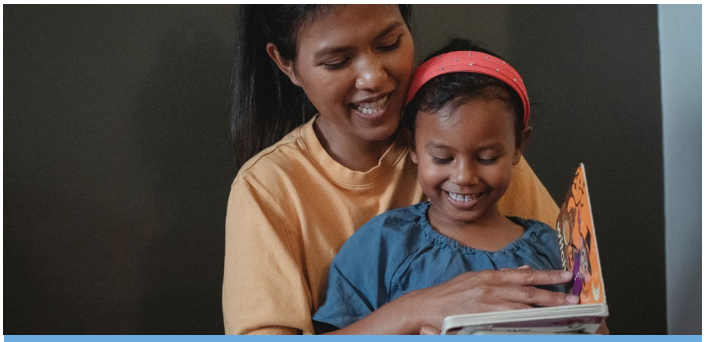
- Focus on building trust, connection and belonging. Some sole parents may experience isolation or lack support networks.
- Provide time for informal conversation and peer-to-peer support.
- Consider welcoming practices for new attendees, such as introductions or informal buddy systems.
- Link participants with relevant support services when appropriate- for example housing, financial counselling, mental health support, employment and education opportunities.
- Be flexible and understanding of attendance, recognising that sole parents often manage unpredictable schedules.
- Acknowledge and celebrate small milestones and achievements for both parents and children.

Partnerships and Promotion

- Partner with community organisations, family services, schools, health services and local councils.
- Promote the group through youth and family services, social media, community noticeboards and local networks.
- Use inclusive, strengths-based and non-judgemental language in all promotional material.
- Emphasise benefits such as connection, peer support, shared experience and a welcoming environment for parents and children.
- Encourage word-of-mouth promotion, as trusted peer recommendations are often the most effective way to engage sole parents.



For more advice and resources, register your playgroup!



An Important Note

Take time to build trust and create a safe, respectful environment where sole parents feel valued and understood. Many participants may be managing multiple pressures. Be mindful of emotional wellbeing, including experiences of anxiety, loneliness or previous negative interactions with services.

Encourage participation in ways that feel comfortable, removing any pressure or expectation. Invite parents to contribute ideas, share experiences if they choose and help shape the group over time. Model vulnerability and openness – you might, for example, share your own parenting struggles in a way that invites others to open up.

More Information

Raising Children Network's Information On Parenting After a Separation

Dedicated information from Australia's most reliable parenting information source on positive parenting for mums or dads who have been through a separation.

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby: Single Parenting

The Federal Government's parenting website, which offers guidance on parenting without a partner.

The Better Health Channel : Single Parenting

The Victorian Government's health website, which provides specific information and advice on parenting on your own.