



Playgroup makes a difference

The Rich Tapestry of Inclusion

Date: Thursday 19 March 2020

Location: Hawthorn Arts Centre, 360 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

We should acknowledge differences, we should greet differences, until differences make no difference.” (Dr Adela A Allen)

Playgroup naturally brings together children, carers, and families, creating and supporting meaningful connections and relationships within and beyond playgroup. How do these ‘building blocks’ of our community encourage, support and promote experiences of inclusion? Is it possible that playgroup provides a place for inclusion that results in an enduring influence for our communities and society?

The Playgroup Victoria Annual Conference 2020 is the opportunity for you to contribute to conversations and be a visionary of playgroup practice, who seeks to ensure that acceptance and equity are standard, and not an exception in playgroup - children and families first early years’ experience. Families’ timely and opportune involvement in playgroup can have lasting and far reaching impact on children’s learning, development and wellbeing, positive family functioning and quality of life. The scope of impact extends into the broader community, through increased social capital. Playgroups “... ideally create a community that values diversity and includes people as they are” (Hyde, Robert and Conway, 2010). Inclusive practices support the gathering of individual that enable “shared understandings of various contexts or life situations that are interpreted from relationships and collaboration” (Keefe and Carrington, 2007, p. 28).

We understand that people do not enter the debate on inclusion until they first understand what inclusion is. Effectively grasping this concept entails defining inclusion and also understanding the underlying theory behind the concept.

In the broader sense, inclusion encapsulates civil rights and social justice; “empowering access to opportunity, addressing structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations.” (Family Safety Victoria 2019, pi) We pursue inclusion with the objective of achieving an equitable society in which all can participate and prosper, and where conditions permit all to reach their full potential. (Family Safety Victoria 2019)

The early childhood and social service system defines and underpins inclusion with diverse principles and values. The commonalities in these definitions, principles and values have aptly been categorised into three broad dimensions: Access, Participation and Outcomes (Early Childhood Intervention Australia 2016); “Inclusion means that every child has access to, participates meaningfully in, and experiences positive outcomes from early childhood education and care programs” (Early Childhood Intervention Australia 2016, p20). Relating this to playgroup, this explanation of inclusion extends to parents/carers, families and their community.



Playgroup makes a difference

It is important to acknowledge participation and inclusion as recognisable human rights as is stated in many relevant declarations, laws, and frameworks, e.g. EYLF, VEYLDF, UN international convention on the rights of the child.

Playgroup provides an opportunity to be an inclusive place for children and their families. Bringing children together irrespective of their differences provides an opportunity for them to learn and appreciate differences, yet similarities between us, and accept other people's perspective (Atmakur 2013). Playgroups could therefore act as "joyful incubators of a more inclusive society, in which children ... [can] participate equally and enjoy equal opportunities to flourish." (Atmakur 2013, p1)

We invite you to join us as our presenters share their personal and professional reflections of creating and sharing inclusive spaces, their understanding of and commitment to inclusion, and their journey towards inclusive practice. Our speakers will challenge you to identify and recognise your own biases, empowering and urging you to mindfully enhance your practice to work towards ensuring acceptance and equity for all playgroup participants.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT CONFERENCE

Keynote Speakers:

- Fadzi Whande - Inclusion Leader, University of Western Australia
- Alistair Gibbs - Vice President, Victorian branch of Early Childhood Australia
- Dr Sally Smith - CEO, PEEPLE UK

Conference schedule:

8.00-8.45am	Registrations
8.45-11.00am	Welcome and keynote addresses
11.00-11.25am	Morning Tea
11.25am-3.30pm	Workshops
3.30-3.50pm	Afternoon Tea
3.50-5.00pm	Final keynote address and closing

Travel and parking:

Please note that parking is very limited around the venue. It is recommended that conference attendees travel by public transport. If you must drive in, we recommend you arrive early and make your own arrangements for all day parking.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Deadlines for submissions

Friday January 17

Formats – presentation or workshop

There are 45-minute time slots provided for interactive workshops or presentations.

Learning objectives for participants

All workshops, presentations and demonstrations are to adhere to the Conference Theme as is explicated in the Conference Overview above.



Playgroup makes a difference

From previous experience, we know that the majority of Playgroup Victoria Conference participants already have a fair amount of knowledge and skills around playgroups and play experiences. At this conference we want our participants to be brought up-to-date with the latest knowledge and research in the field, as well as be inspired and challenged to enhance their practice with strategies they will learn in your session, that will assist them in ensuring acceptance and equity for all playgroup participants.

Who selects the abstracts and decides how they will be presented?

All submitted abstracts will go through an assessment process carried out by the Playgroup Victoria Conference Working Group. This group makes the final selection of abstracts to be included in the conference program.

When will submitters be notified about abstract acceptance?

Decisions will be made no later Friday January 31.

Who do I speak to about my abstract submission?

Isabella Rosinsky
Email: irosinsky@playgroup.org.au

What topic areas are of special interest?

Among the topics of special interest are:

- Children's Rights
- Cultural Issues
- Parents rights
- Participatory practice
- Primary messaging
- Disability issues
- Curriculum Innovations
- Families
- Inclusion
- Innovative Practices
- Policy Development
- Service Delivery Models

Conference Registration

Presenters should note all costs to attend the Conference must be met from their own resources and are required to complete their conference registration via Tri Booking.

How do I submit my abstract?

Abstracts must be submitted by answering all the questions in the form via the following link:

playgroupvic.typeform.com/to/f8bCVK