



Playgroup
Conference
2026

Better Together

Cultivating Connections

The power of collaboration, big and small, creates stronger, more connected communities, families and children. At the 2026 Playgroup Conference, we will celebrate playgroup, with a focus on why people are, scientifically and anecdotally speaking, *Better Together*.

The Playgroup Conference 2026

Our 2026 Playgroup Conference theme emphasises that we achieve more when we work together: *It Takes a Village*. Whether families partner with practitioners, organisations collaborate with other organisations and communities, or professionals join forces with researchers and policymakers, the goal is to build authentic, respectful relationships that benefit everyone involved.

Playgroups are unique within the community - places where togetherness can be embraced and thrives. Playgroups are much more than just a place for children to play - they are vibrant spaces where relationships are built, ideas are exchanged and communities grow.

By focusing on collaboration, our *Better Together* theme highlights how playgroups can serve as a foundation for collective action that addresses broader social issues, all while supporting families in their parenting roles and children in their early years. The capacity to support children and families is enhanced further when professionals partner with other services - combining their efforts and resources for the greater good.

Join us at the 2026 Playgroup Conference as we celebrate the strength of working together. Let's support and empower families and build stronger communities, one partnership at a time!

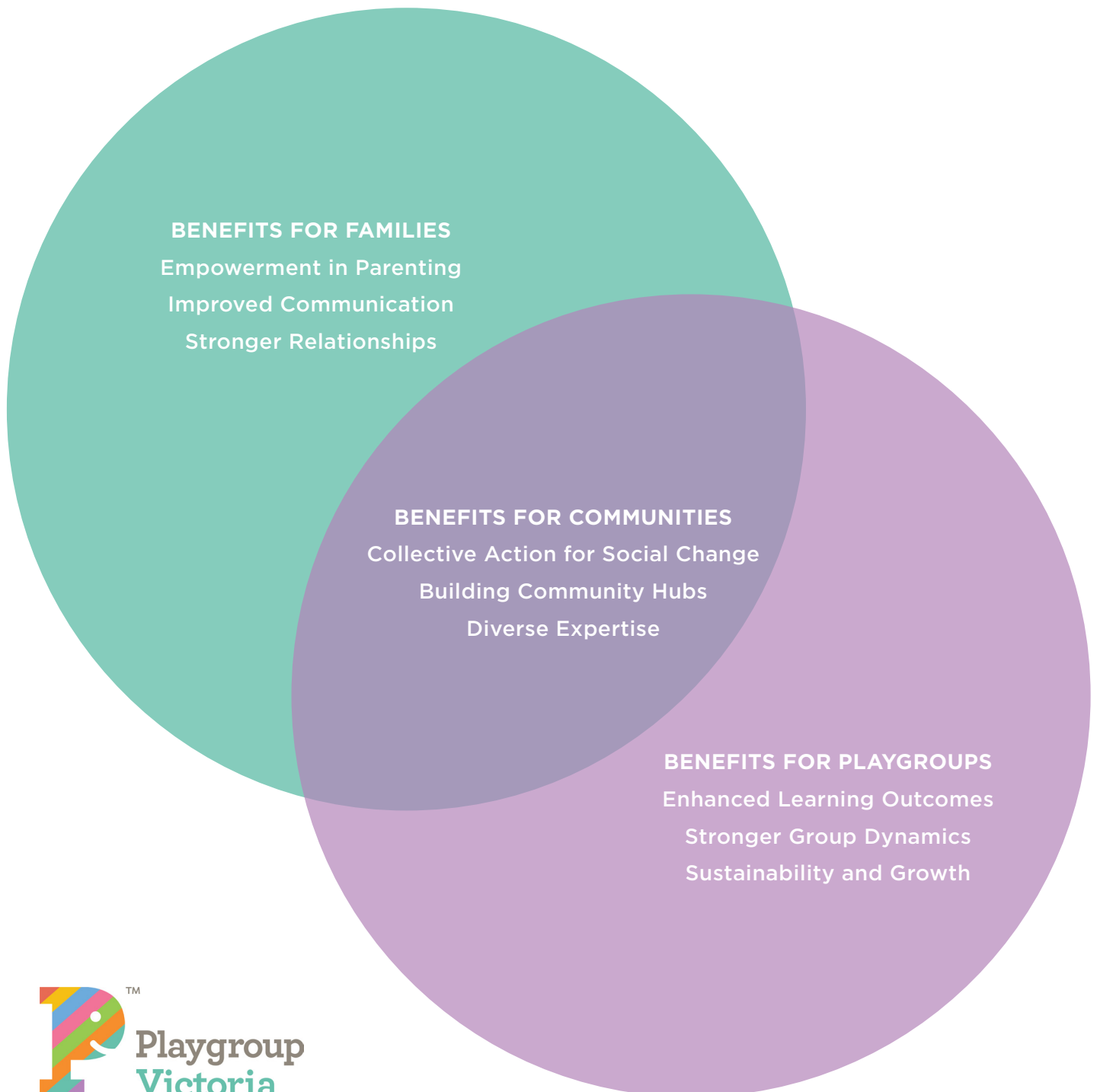


“Partnerships and collaboration are the heartbeat of our mission. When we come together—sharing our strengths, sparking innovation, and uniting our resources—we unlock powerful possibilities and create lasting, positive change for families.”

- LEANNE DHAMI, PLAYGROUP DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Holistic Partnerships

Let's celebrate the benefit of working together! Partnerships are essential for playgroups, families, communities and the professionals that support them. Partnerships create opportunities for meaningful collaboration, shared responsibility and mutual support that benefits everyone involved. Together let's build stronger communities, one partnership at a time.



Working Together

The Power of Shared Insights and Knowledge

Collaboration allows people and organisations to pool their resources, expertise and knowledge to work towards achieving common goals.

For example, playgroups partnering with local organisations such as the library or community gardens can lead to growth and connection within a local community. Similarly, collaborations between non-profit organisations and businesses can help address social and environmental issues while promoting economic growth. Relationships between different community groups can help address a range of issues from housing and education to public safety and health. Collaboration allows mutual parties to build upon their strengths, creating new possibilities for meaningful change.

Effective partnerships are built on trust, mutual respect, clear communication and shared goals.

Partnerships create opportunities for all parties involved to share their unique strength. This could include a parent's insight into their child and a professional's specialised knowledge about early childhood development. Together, they partner-up to achieve better outcomes for the child.

By working together through partnerships, playgroups can create environments where children thrive, families gain support and communities grow stronger.



“Playgroup is a unique concept. Each playgroup is as different as the community it serves and can be a space that responds and reflects the needs of those attending. The power of playgroup is in the notion that everyone can be involved and contribute to the group’s wellbeing. From the adults with capacity to help others who offer peer support, or those who share a skill, to the children’s creative opportunities, social development, and enjoyment of discovery in their play together.”

- MAUREEN LEAHY, LIFETIME PLAYGROUP CHAMPION

2026 Conference Topics

Family and Community Partnerships

Explore how families can work together within playgroups to create supportive networks. Learn how community collaborations can address shared challenges and foster inclusivity.

Professional Collaboration

Learn more strategies to build strong partnerships between families and professionals, ensuring holistic and child-centered approaches to care and education.

Group Dynamics in Playgroups

Dive into the importance of relational practice, where mutual respect and understanding strengthen group interactions.

Collective Action

Understand how pooling resources, sharing expertise and working toward common goals can lead to meaningful change for children, families and communities.

Respecting Roles and Expertise

Celebrate the diverse skills and experiences that each individual brings to the table, fostering trust and transparency in all interactions.

Togetherness at Playgroup

Family social networks, reciprocity and overcoming isolation, associated with a sense of community and belonging.

What to Expect

- Practical sessions about fostering partnerships and improving communication
- Insights into collaborative practices
- Networking opportunities to connect with peers, researchers and policymakers
- Real-world examples of successful collaborations in playgroup settings



Communities Create All That's Great!



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Playgroup Victoria acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community and we pay our respect to them, their cultures and to the elders past and present.



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