



# PLAYGROUP MANUAL

for Uniting Churches in South Australia

Prepared by the Children and Family Ministry Team

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(Revised August 2013)

## Mission Resourcing SA playgroup resources

### **Playgroup Manual**

This *Playgroup Manual* has been prepared to assist and encourage congregations who are establishing new playgroups or reorganising existing playgroups.

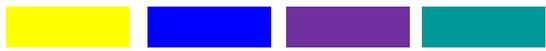
### **Playgroup Program Ideas**

The *Playgroup Program Ideas* resource package is designed to support playgroup coordinators and volunteers. It offers ideas for 132 'theme' events — eleven each term, four terms each year, three years. Ideas include: activities, games, crafts, stories and songs plus ideas for adding a clearer Christian focus to the program. See Appendix 1/1 for an overview of the themes.

*Playgroup Program Ideas* are not a formal curriculum, but starting points for creative planning by a playgroup team. The themes can be used in any sequence; the ideas can be adapted to suit individual situations.

Both these resources are available for playgroups free to download from the website <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/playgroups>





# Playgroup manual contents

**Please note:** in this document the term ‘parent’ is used for any adult — parent, relative, family day care staff or other recognised carer —who has responsibility for a child and who brings the child to playgroup.

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## About playgroups

In recent years, playgroups have become a key children's ministry strategy for churches located in areas where there are young families. Playgroups may cater for member children, but generally have a stronger mission focus than traditional Sunday-based programs.

This resource is designed to help churches with existing playgroup ministries and churches thinking about starting a playgroup to think through and plan playgroups that reflect their congregation's mission and values and serve their communities in a truly Christian way.

### What is a playgroup?

- A safe time
- A set time
- A fun time
- Children and parents playing together
- Children playing with other children
- Parents supporting one another

A playgroup is a group of children and their parents who meet together on a regular basis.

The children are under school age. The parents are mums, dads, grandparents, relatives, family day care providers or anyone who regularly cares for the children.

In playgroup children spend positive time with their parents and have the opportunity to interact with children of similar ages and with other adults.

Playgroup is an opportunity for parents to spend quality time with their child/ren as well as interact with and form relationship with other parents and children

### Types of playgroups

Although all playgroups are similar, playgroups can be organised to meet the needs of specialised groups or to provide particular programs:

- general playgroup: with a mixture of adults and children from different backgrounds
- playgroups for specific ages, eg baby playgroup for ages 0-18 months
- playgroups for specific parent groups that allow parents to discuss and compare common issues that relate specifically to them, eg mums group, dads group (eg Bible Reading Fellowship's 'Who let the dads out' book by Mark Chester and web site), grandparents group, young mums group, single parents group
- ethno-specific playgroup: bringing together people with similar language and culture to support each other
- special needs group: bringing together children and/or parents with special needs (particularly physical disabilities) to support each other and to learn and develop skills for the child and parent.
- blended/step family playgroups: brings together children and their families experiencing similar changes
- special interest groups such as music groups, eg *Mainly Music* ([www.mainlymusic.org.au](http://www.mainlymusic.org.au)) or physical playgroups (eg. kindergym) or art groups
- mobile playgroups in remote areas.

## What is a baby playgroup?

Some churches set up special playgroups — or special spaces within a larger playgroup — for first-time parents with children under one year.

Children under 12 months will not participate in many activities organised for older children. It is good to have special toys available that are safe and appropriate for babies.

Baby playgroups are primarily for the support of parents — mostly mums — who may be feeling isolated and uncertain, or may even be struggling with some level of post-natal depression. Some may be on maternity leave from paid employment. Others may have left the work force and need to adjust to their new role and perhaps new, more stringent, family budget.

Baby playgroups can give these parents a chance to get out of the house and meet with other mums — to talk about their common concerns and to observe how other mums cope with situations. Playgroup leaders may model ways parents can play with their babies.

There may be a place in a baby playgroup to introduce some formal, but simple, teaching about parenting or Bible study aimed at encouraging the parents.

## What is a Christian playgroup?

A 'Church based' playgroup is a playgroup that is operated by a church. Church-based playgroup organisers are called simply to serve: recognising and attempting to meet some of the physical, emotional and relational needs of parents of young children in the community. Leaders are aware of their own expertise and knowledge in various areas of child care. They may refer families to competent agencies and individuals when the help required is beyond their ability, especially regarding health, finances, counselling or pastoral issues/advice.

Christian playgroups go further and provide opportunities for families to explore faith by providing intentional faith enriching activities within their program.

Intentionally faith nourishing playgroups may become a 'fresh expression' of church for the children and parents involved — a faith community on its own that may stand in some relationship with the faith community of a sponsoring congregation.

For more information about fresh expressions, please contact the UCSA Fresh Expressions officer: Rev Ruthmary Bond (08) 8236 4244; [freshexpressions@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:freshexpressions@sa.uca.org.au)

*Messy Church* is for families with children of any age, usually 5-12. For resources see: [www.brfonline.org.uk/messy-church/](http://www.brfonline.org.uk/messy-church/)



# Purpose of your playgroup

An effective church-based playgroup begins with an agreed purpose. The purpose aligns with both the needs of the community and the mission of the church. The purpose helps your congregation, playgroup coordinator and playgroup team plan a program, make decisions about how you operate and evaluate the effectiveness of your playgroup.

A clear statement of your purpose (or a 'vision statement') can also ensure that everyone involved in your playgroup will have similar expectations.

Here is a sample purpose statement.

**Small Beginnings**  
is an activity of  
**Parafield Gardens Uniting Church**  
whose mission is to be  
a vibrant caring community  
sharing the transforming love of Jesus.

**Small Beginnings**  
carries out that mission  
by providing a safe, welcoming environment  
in which parents (carers) and their young children:

- (1) come together and interact with other adults and children in similar situations and with similar needs to develop a sense of community
- (2) experience together a range of social and early learning activities that they might not experience on their own
- (3) are exposed to the basic gospel message of God's love and forgiveness through the actions and words of leaders and the words of simple Bible stories and verses
- (4) have fun.

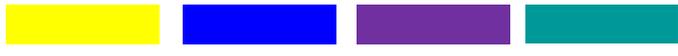
You may use the Parafield Gardens statement as a pattern to develop your own playgroup purpose statement. You may also want to develop a shorter, punchier statement for use in advertising outside your congregation.

Short version

**Small Beginnings**  
Fun for parents and pre-school children  
— new friends, exciting experiences and great stories.

You may

- display the short statement as a poster at playgroup
- distribute copies of the long statement to all team members (and prospective members)
- use either statement to promote the playgroup in the congregation
- use the short statement in promotional information to the community.



# Benefits of playgroups

## Benefits for children

A 2009 national report 'A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia' identified key developmental expectations of children starting school: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills.

A well-organised playgroup can play a large role in children's development — and parents' competence in fostering development in all these areas, eg

### Physical health and well being

- introduce children to nutritional meals and snacks
- expose children to a variety of exercise
- provide a healthy and enjoyable variety of activities and interests
- create a regular positive playtime with their parent

### Social competence and emotional maturity

- provide experience interacting with a variety of children and adults
- help children begin to identify and express their emotions

### Language and communication skills

- give children the opportunity to listen to and speak with a variety of people and about a variety of topics
- provide experiences in listening to stories, singing songs and speaking rhymes
- provide experiences to talk about and vocabulary to do so

### Cognitive skills

- help children develop an understanding of structured time and routine
- expose children to a wide range of opportunities to explore their environment and their community and to reflect on their experiences
- give children the opportunity to manipulate a variety of toys and materials
- build an understanding of environments outside of the home

Besides all this, playgroup should be fun, safe and give children something to look forward to, no matter what else is happening in their life.

## Benefits for parents

A well organised playgroup can help parents

- develop relationships with new people and build a support network (including pastoral care by the congregation)
- observe and learn parenting skills from other parents
- develop an understanding of early childhood development stages and how to deal with them
- enjoy quality positive time with their child
- share their ideas, concerns and experiences
- spend regular time outside their home environment
- have some adult conversation
- value and appreciate their children.

## **Benefits for a congregation**

A playgroup can be a way for a church to

- provide a service to people from the church and the community
- initiate relationships between church goers and people from the community
- invite people into a church building and possibly the church community in a non-threatening way
- be a witness of God's love through service
- provide an additional or alternative way for families with toddlers to learn about faith.

A playgroup has the potential of revitalising a fading congregation and giving members of all ages greater contact with, and understanding of, the people in their surrounding community.



A playgroup often starts with the dream of an individual or a small group. Here are some steps to help in moving from the dream to reality.

As a Christian group you will make prayer — both asking for and listening to God's guidance — a part of each step as you begin and continue a playgroup program.

Note that these are not necessarily sequential steps. Each consideration impacts the others, eg your space and equipment help to determine your program and your program helps determine your budget.

## Groundwork

Form a small **playgroup dream team** to get things started.

- Survey your local community to determine if there is a need for a playgroup — either a general playgroup or a specialised one.
- Share the dream with your church leaders. Show them the benefits of the playgroup for the church and the community. Ask for support and a commitment to provide volunteers, space, time and equipment for a playgroup that suits the needs of your community.
- Contact the Synod's Children and Family Ministry Team (08) 8236 4281 to see what support and resources are available for you, such as promotion on the UC-SA website: <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/parents/find-a-playgroup/>
- Visit some existing playgroups to see how they operate and solicit advice based on their experiences. You might even explore ways your two groups could work in cooperation. (This could be done by the dream team and/or by the operating team.)
- Define your **purpose**. (See 'The Purpose of your Playgroup' page 6)
- Recruit and prepare a **coordinator** who can help you achieve your purpose. If you are going to employ a coordinator, please contact the Children and Family Ministry Team or the Human Resources Department at the Synod and Presbytery office. We have valuable information and resources for employing congregations.
- Recruit and prepare a **playgroup operating team**. (See 'Finding Team Members, page 11.)

## Planning and preparation

At this point turn over the operation of playgroup to the coordinator and operating team.

- The coordinator and key team members set the **starting date** and **schedule** for your first term of playgroup sessions. Talk with families to define their needs and find a suitable day and time for playgroup
- The coordinator, key team members and interested parents decide on a **session plan** that meets your purpose. What will children and parents do in your playgroup? Include a variety of age-appropriate activities and cater for all learning styles.
- The coordinator, team members and interested parents develop a **program** for your first term of playgroup. You may use a series of themes such as those suggested in our *Playgroup Program Ideas* resource
- The coordinator and key team members allocate **specific roles** or duties to team members to spread the workload. Think about each person's time commitments, interests and skills, eg hospitality, conversation, catering, music, craft, story-telling, dance, health care, administration, cleaning . . .
- Congregation leadership determines how **pastoral care** (of team members as well as parents and children) will occur and, importantly, who team members can go to with problems and concerns. Congregational leaders should interpret the *Uniting Church Code of Ethics* for the team, particularly as it relates to self-care, boundaries and limitations in friendship and counselling. (See 'Pastoral Care in Playgroup', page 13.)

- The coordinator and key team members (with the church treasurer or finance officer) work out a **budget**. (See 'Playgroup finances, page 18.)
- The coordinator and key team members (with the congregation's property team) organise your **space and equipment**. Make sure the space available to you is suitable to the program you intend to run. Begin to gather clean and safe toys and equipment. (See 'Playgroup space and equipment', page 15)
- The coordinator and key team members (with the congregation's property team) check the **safety** of the space(s) and equipment that you plan to use. (See 'Playgroup space and equipment', page 15)  
For risk assessment fact sheets and documentation, see: <http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/duty-of-care.html>. There is excellent safety advice at: [www.kidsafesa.com.au](http://www.kidsafesa.com.au)
- The coordinator, team and members of the congregation promote the playgroup and encourage families to try it out. See the promotion section for ideas.

### The first session

Your first session could be a 'come-and-try' event run along the lines you are planning, but with a lot of emphasis on welcoming and accepting enquiring families and explaining your vision and plans.

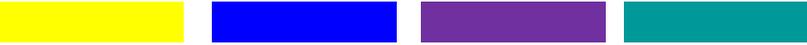
You might even consider a 'dry run' for a few families you already know, just as a chance for the team to settle in and get a better understanding of what they need to do. Debrief with the team after the session.

Then move on to your first official playgroup session:

- The coordinator and team run your first playgroup session.
- The coordinator and team (with some parents) evaluate the first session. Keep the things that worked and adjust the things that didn't.

### Continuing

- The coordinator and team **run** and evaluate subsequent regular sessions.
- The coordinator keeps the church council/leadership apprised of what is happening in playgroup so that they can continue to support the program effectively.
- Early each term, begin planning the following term: dates, special events, programs themes, outings, volunteer team responsibilities, guests, materials and equipment.
- At the end of the term the coordinator writes a report for your church council. The process of writing this report and discussing it with both the team and the church council can be helpful in evaluating the program and planning for the future. Continue to do so each term or at least annually.
- You may also share your stories and new ideas or connections to encourage other churches. You can do so by contacting the Children and Family Ministry Team (08) 8236 4281 or email [children@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au)



## A playgroup team

Playgroup is about people. The playgroup co-ordinator and team members are the most important component of your playgroup: more important than the space or the equipment or the particular program.

The right coordinator can make a playgroup successful. The right team members can make things run better, inappropriate team members create more work and can disrupt the playgroup.

### Finding team members

Here are a few tips to help you find the right people to lead your playgroup.

- Pray! Before you start recruiting, pray that the right person or people will be excited about this ministry. Involve your church's prayer team as prayer support.
- Advertise your playgroup personnel opportunities in your church's newsletters and bulletin board. But don't rely on this method. Actively seek out the people you really need and want on the team.
- Find people for specific tasks, not just all-rounders. Don't expect any one person to do everything. You may need people with administration skills, a treasurer, caterers, cleaners, furniture movers, craft people, musicians, a librarian and more, in addition to people with the calling and skills to work directly with children and parents.
- Discover people's passions and hobbies. Approach people whom you believe have a gift that they could offer the playgroup.
- Be positive about playgroup and tell people how enjoyable and rewarding it is to be a part of the playgroup team.
- Consider asking a group of people to take on a role together. For example, ask a small group of grandparents who are free during the playgroup time to take on setting up or hospitality, or craft, or story or music time.  
Group responsibility relieves the coordinator of rostering individuals to areas responsibility. It also means that if someone is unavailable at the last minute they can organise amongst themselves for someone else to fill in.
- Recruit recruiters! If you are not good at asking people to volunteer, ask someone else to find the volunteers for you. Think of someone who is well respected and thoughtful. They will need to understand the specific tasks you are seeking people to do. They may come up with people you hadn't even considered.
- Don't overlook people who may be able to take on a small role, as this may free up someone else to take on more responsibility. For example, a story teller may appreciate having another person visit the library regularly to choose a story for the group or to select some books relating to playgroup themes.
- Don't overlook quiet achievers. Some of the best volunteers go about their role quietly.
- Don't overlook the parents themselves. Many young mums, taking time out from the workforce, bring the skills with them and are happy to keep practicing those skills in a limited, rewarding environment like playgroup.

### UCA Screening

All playgroup team members (paid and volunteer) must have a Screening and Authority check which includes a National Criminal History Check through the Uniting Church. A current UCA Screening is absolutely crucial for any person working with young and vulnerable people. This screening must be updated every three years.

For information and form see [docadmin@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:docadmin@sa.uca.org.au)

## Building a team

- If possible, take a few minutes before and/or after each session to pray together — about playgroup and about personal concerns of team members.
- Remind one another frequently and regularly of the purpose of your playgroup. (See page 6.)
- Build up the whole team through regular team sessions in which you focus on a skill that would benefit most of the volunteers. Helpful resources include:
  - ▶ *Called to Care Workbook for Leaders of children and young people* (in your church's *Called to Care* packet)
  - ▶ The Professional Development page in each term of *Playgroup Program Ideas* (from <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/playgroups> ) See Appendix 2/1 for a list of topics.
  - ▶ *The Very Essential Must-have Really Useful Guide to Working with Children* (Scripture Union, [susa@sa.su.org.au](mailto:susa@sa.su.org.au) (08) 8371 0811).
- Have a team 'splurge' event each term, in which team members can socialise away from the playgroup venue, get to know one another and new team members and celebrate what they are doing.
- Ensure that each volunteer has a job description, formal or informal, and knows what they are expected to do, how to access equipment needed, who to go to with problems, the limits of their authority and responsibility.
- Encourage and acknowledge people when they help. If people sense that their contribution is valued, they will become more confident of their capability and more likely to continue.

## Training and development of team members

- Offer individual training or clear instruction to each person about their specific role and tasks. Studies have shown that one of the largest frustrations of volunteers is that they are unsure of their boundaries or their role. Team members who are unsure about their roles may feel that they are wasted and unappreciated.
- **Child Safe Environments (Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect)** Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times. Churches have a fundamental responsibility to care for and protect children and young people.

Mandatory reporting of reasonable suspicion of child abuse and neglect is the legal requirement of any person working with children whether their role is paid and/or voluntary.

It is expected that playgroup team members complete a full day course and then half-day refresher courses every three years.

Child Safe Environments training covers: What is child abuse and neglect? How to recognise the signs of abuse/neglect; How and when to notify; How values, attitudes and experiences may impact on our understanding of, and our response to, child abuse and neglect.

A number of organisations provide this training including the UC/SA Synod through its 'Called to Care' initiative. All sessions are accredited Families SA training where a Certificate of Completion is given to each participant. For further info contact the Training and Development Officer P: (08) 8236 4248 E: [lvinnall@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:lvinnall@sa.uca.org.au)

- **First Aid** It is strongly recommended that anyone involved in Children's Ministry completes at least a basic level of first aid training so they can handle any emergency that may arise when caring for children. St John's SA and the Red Cross provide a range of training from basic first aid to First Aid for Centres and Schools (which is required for registered teachers in SA) to a Senior First Aid course.

St John SA:  
P: 8306 6999  
E: [courses@stjohnsa.com.au](mailto:courses@stjohnsa.com.au)  
W: <http://www.stjohnsa.com.au/courses/body.asp>

Red Cross SA:  
P: 8293 9200  
E: [training@sa.redcross.org.au](mailto:training@sa.redcross.org.au)  
W: [http://www.redcross.org.au/sa/first\\_aid\\_training.htm](http://www.redcross.org.au/sa/first_aid_training.htm)

## **What is pastoral care?**

The concept of pastoral care is based on the image of a shepherd and sheep. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, calls us to be pastors/shepherds who care for his sheep, protect his sheep, feed his sheep, find his sheep when they are lost, lead them to the Shepherd who restores their souls. Our 'sheep' are the children and parents who attend our playgroup. Our 'sheep' are also ourselves and our fellow team members.

The Uniting Church speaks of pastoral care as: 'oversight', 'building up in faith and love', 'sustaining in hope' and 'leading into full participation in Christ's mission in the world'.  
(UCA Constitution)

## **Pastoral Care of parents**

Playgroups are not child-minding services. They exist primarily to provide pastoral care and support for parents. So, like good shepherds, playgroup organisers need to be listeners and observers, to be aware of how parents need to be fed at any particular time — with information, support, simple kindness. Playgroup shepherds need to keep watch for emotional, social, or parenting dangers the parents in their care can be helped to avoid. Whenever possible, by their words and deeds, they lead parents toward Jesus, their source of living water, love and forgiveness.

## **Pastoral Care of children**

All playgroup team members should be aware of and abide by the guidelines set out in the Uniting Church's 'Called to Care' package. They must 'do no harm' to the children as they help them to develop, physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually.

## **Pastoral Care of volunteers**

Volunteers are an endangered species. Playgroup volunteers need to be protected from the dangers of confusion and discouragement, over-commitment and burn-out. Like shepherds building a sheep pen, volunteers must be protected with boundaries. They must be nurtured in their personal spiritual growth and in competence and confidence in their area of service. This care is a mutual responsibility of the team, under the direction of the playgroup coordinator and the minister of the congregation.

## **Pastoral Care of the co-ordinator**

There is a danger that the playgroup co-ordinator is seen as the super-competent shepherd, relied on by children, parents and volunteers to meet all their needs. The coordinator, paid or voluntary, requires the same care as the volunteer team members. It is the responsibility of the Church Council and the called minister of the congregation to see that the co-ordinator receives the pastoral care they require.

## **The role of the called minister of the congregation**

Ministers in church-based playgroups have varying levels of involvement in the playgroup. Some are very hands-on and relate to the parents and children under the same guidelines as other volunteers. Some attend playgroup sessions occasionally as special guests. Some focus their attention on the pastoral care and oversight of volunteers who are members of their 'flock' and on pastoral supervision of the playgroup coordinator. Some ministers are called on occasionally to moderate disputes or to provide counselling beyond the ability of the volunteers. They must be careful to have their own boundaries relating to their ability to deal with these situations.

Caring for the minister involves clarity about the role the minister is expected to play.

See the Uniting Church's 'Code of Ethics' training and 'Pastoral Partners' materials for more about pastoral care.

# Playgroup space and equipment

A safe, clean, attractive and fun place shows that children and parents are welcome and that the church cares about them. Dirty spaces and worn-out equipment give a different message. Parents appreciate a place where they can feel that their child is safe.

## **An adequate space**

Playgroup spaces are seldom custom-built. Playgroups can be held in homes and in halls; in collections of small rooms and in single large spaces. Coordinators need to be creative in using the space/s available to them, particularly when the same space is used at other times for other purposes.

The space must be large enough to cater for the number of people involved and to allow for both whole-group activities and individual activities; boisterous activities and quiet ones. If possible utilise both outdoor and an indoor space.

## **An attractive space**

Think colour and think child-size.

- A coat of bright, washable paint on walls can turn a dull space into an attractive one. Wall art can also lift a tired old space. You can either create your own or purchase decals or posters.
- Mount children's arts and craft on coloured card to make it look spectacular. If you have permission to do so, take and display photos of children involved in playgroup activities.
- Keep displays up to date. Display children's work for no more than a term. Regularly remove old displays and out of date advertising.
- Avoid using pins for displays where children can reach them.
- Display — out of reach of little hands — helpful information that parents can take home. Contact Parenting SA for their free guides: (08) 8303 1660, [www.parenting.sa.gov.au](http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au)
- Display information about what is happening at your church, eg a brochure or poster about small groups or children's ministry. What does your church have to offer the families of people in your community?
- Use bright and easy-to-clean furniture, from, for example, Ikea and Modern Teaching Aids (contact Synergy for MTA discounts: [synergy@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:synergy@sa.uca.org.au) )

## **A clean space**

- If possible, install easy-to-clean flooring. Vacuum floors and wipe down hard surfaces after (and, if necessary, before) each session
- Clean your soft furnishings including carpet, floor cushions and rugs once-a-term.
- Clean your plastic and wooden toys. Get out a big tub or fill up a plastic sandpit with hot soapy water. Wash the toys; then rinse them off with hot water or a steam cleaner.
- Clean your storage containers.
- Once-a-year clean your window furnishings. The air that comes into your space goes past window treatments, so make sure they are dust free. A steam cleaning device is a good investment; there are readily available and affordable.
- Clean your outside area and outdoor toys. Nasty spiders love to find homes in small spaces so whip out the duster whenever you see a spider web!

You may want to make up a checklist of weekly, monthly and annual cleaning tasks, and recruit some volunteers to help with the cleaning. Consult with other users of your space about the cleaning schedule, but make sure it gets done.

## **A safe space**

- Use good storage and keep spaces clear of clutter.
- Discard any equipment that is brittle or damaged.
- Ensure easy access for families with prams.
- Ensure that children can't easily 'escape' into an unsafe area.

See the comprehensive *Playgroup Checklist for Safe Spaces* at <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/childrens-ministry/playgroups.html>

## **A compliant space**

Ensure that

- an asbestos register has been completed
- there are illuminated exit signs
- fire evacuation procedures are up to date and clearly visible.
- exit doors open to areas that can be monitored. For example if they open to the car park or road area, are you able to monitor the door to ensure that children stay in a safe space?
- safety glass has been installed in all low level doors and windows or any opening a person could walk or fall through
- outdoor areas are free of hazards including poisonous plants
- electrical equipment has been checked and carries up-to-date compliance tags
- there are amenities for people with a disability
- prams can access the playgroup space
- car parking is accessible and safe for children moving from cars to playgroup space.

Check with your church's property team and/or refer to the Synod's Property Team for further information: (08) 8236 4210 / (08) 8236 4240; [Property\\_Staff@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:Property_Staff@sa.uca.org.au)

## **Risk management**

It is important to ensure that the premises (regardless of whether it is Uniting Church premises or someone else's) are user friendly and that any potential hazards are removed or reduced as much as possible.

There are stringent compliance requirements in relation to children's spaces and play areas. Below is some information provided by Catherine Stock (Congregation Property Advisor).

- The design and installation of playground equipment and other fittings and fixtures for children, or spaces predominantly for children are subject to various and specific Australian Standards.
- Playground equipment should be manufactured and installed by playground specialists. In some case development approval may be required from local council. A regular maintenance schedule should be applied to all equipment intended for children.
- Churches with playground equipment or regular playgroup and children's activities should so obtain a copy of the Playspace Resource Kit by contacting Kidsafe SA
- Australian Standards are a minimum benchmark for your playgroup equipment: see [www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index](http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index)  
[Child injury prevention and child safety in South Australia - Kidsafe South Australia](#)

## Playgroup equipment

Like the space itself, all furnishings, play equipment, toys, books, and art and craft materials used in a playgroup should be safe, clean, compliant and suited to the children who will be using it.

You do not need a lot of expensive equipment to run a playgroup — particularly if the team is creative. However a range of colourful interesting toys and equipment — often beyond what individual parents can supply in their own home — may attract parents to your playgroup.

For a new playgroup (or an established one) have both a list of your basic requirements and a wish list.

**Money saving hints:** With your lists in hand . . .

- visit second hand and charity shops, fetes, garage sales and eBay
- approach congregation members for their children's outgrown play items, ask them to scout their neighbours and friends
- check with your council about grants for playgroup equipment
- approach individual craftspeople (or men's shed groups) about making furnishings and equipment
- share equipment with other groups in the congregation (eg furniture from Sunday school, toys from nursery, kitchen equipment from women's group). This sort of sharing requires goodwill and good communication on both sides as well as a good inventory of items.
- collect re-cyclable materials for craft work and for children to play with.





# Playgroup finance

A playgroup is a relatively inexpensive program for a church to run, particularly when they use existing facilities. There are, of course, some operating costs.

A playgroup can be either self-funding with small charges for participating families or underwritten by the congregation. Or they may be financed by a combination of sources.

In planning your playgroup budget, look at what funds you will need to run the program you envision; then look at ways of acquiring those funds. You may find that you want to start small and acquire extra equipment as funds become available. Starting with second-hand furnishings and equipment that is in good repair is good stewardship and will cut down on the initial start-up costs. Employment of a paid playgroup coordinator increases the cost of running a playgroup, but it may ensure more efficient use of other funds.

## Record keeping

The way a playgroup handles funds from parents or from other sources demonstrates the respect the church has for the people contributing the money.

Fiscal responsibility is good stewardship. The playgroup coordinator or a competent team member (with the church treasurer) needs to set up a simple accounting system that can be maintained as a way of keeping accurate and transparent records of income and expenses for the playgroup. The playgroup's records will be audited annually along with the church's other financial records.

## Parent contributions

Playgroup fees vary dramatically depending on the demographics of the area and the playgroup facilities, activities and food provided. Here are some typical fee structures for weekly sessions:

Term Fee	Weekly Charge
No term fee	Gold coin or \$3 per family
\$10	Gold coin donation per family
\$25	No weekly charge

Families can also help meet playgroup running expenses through donations (furniture, rugs, blankets, cleaning supplies, toys, books, smocks, tissues, nappies, wipes, nappy sacks, utensils, art supplies; food such as fruit, coffee, tea and cake) and by assisting with administration, cleaning, photocopying, promotion, etc.

## Fundraising

Fundraising for playgroup can be easy, especially if parents (or volunteers from the congregation) take it on as their project. It is best if the playgroup coordinator is not driving the fundraising project.

Be careful which projects you pick; activities like quiz nights are very time consuming to organise. Limit your fundraising to two projects per year. You can be creative in devising a fund-raising activity that uses the skills of the people around you, but some tried-and-true projects seem to work well, eg

- **Toy catalogues.** With these the organiser distributes catalogues to potential customers, receives orders and payment, sends the orders and payment to the company, receives and distributes the products to purchasers.

The playgroup's earnings are generally in kind, selected from the catalogue: art supplies, new furniture, equipment or toys.

- **Kids' movie day.** Make some money while enjoying some time together. Approach your local cinema for inexpensive group-booking tickets. Choose a G-rated popular children's movie and get families from all over the community to come along. Many cinemas will only adults at kids rates and you can charge more on top of that.

- **Bake goods sale.** In addition to home-made goodies, consider a bakery that specialises in fund-raising. A good time of year is around Easter for the hot cross buns.
- **Silent auction.** Run this over a few days that will include a Sunday and a playgroup day. Display some donate goods or services. People bid on the items during the time, each bidder adding their name and up-graded bid to a list attached to the item. The organiser delivers the item to the highest bidder.
- **Toy/book trading table:** Families donate outgrown toys, books and clothing in good condition. Families with younger children purchase the used items for a small charge.
- **Bottle and can collection.** Collect them and recoup the deposit fee.

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship can be a way of having a steady income of money or products.

Some examples of sponsorship:

- Many local councils have money available for community projects like playgroups. Your church could partner with the council to provide the playgroup. You will need to offer to have their logo on your material.
- A fruit and vegetable store could donate each session's fruit and vegetables. Families wouldn't have to bring their own and may be exposed to different food than they ordinarily have. You would have a regular supply of fruit and can prepare it before the session.
- A cafe or bakery could supply a cake to share each week.
- Small groups in the congregation or service clubs in the community may be willing to sponsor the playgroup by providing funds for a particular piece of equipment (particularly assisting disabled children) or a special event.

Make sure that you acknowledge all sponsors and give them updates about what is happening at the playgroup.

## Grants

Grants are an excellent way of getting funding for equipment and projects. They are usually one-off and may have requirements about when and how the money can be used. Here are some of the organisations that provide grants for playgroups.

- Uniting Foundation: <http://presbyterysynod.sa.uca.org.au/uniting-foundation/uniting-foundation.html>
- Local Councils
- Community Benefit SA: <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Default.aspx?tabid=406>
- Parenting SA: <http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au/grants.asp>



## **Called to care**

As Christians we have a duty to comply with the government regulations for caring for the children and parents in playgroup (and for one another) and, even going beyond those regulations.

The Uniting Church SA's 'Called to Care' package — which should be in your church office — is your one-stop shop for resources relating to safety and duty of care.

The package includes the following useful fact sheets, each of which can be slightly adjusted to apply to a playgroup situation.

1. Sample role description of Sunday School Teacher
2. Recruitment screening of people working with children and young people
3. A service of commissioning (and to mark the conclusion of a role in the congregation)
4. Skills and personal qualifications of leaders
5. Mentoring
6. Report about an event for Church Council
7. Risk management (template, assessment matrix and action plan)
8. Critical incident report
9. Planning an event, camp or excursion
10. Copyright and the church
11. Permission, indemnity and medical forms
12. Driver declaration form
13. SA first aid
14. Emergency response plan
15. Emergency contact information
16. Food handling
17. Dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct in the Uniting Church
18. Mandated Notification
22. An equipment and premises audit tool

Many of these fact sheets can also be downloaded directly from the web site.

<http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/>

There is also a 30 page *Called to Care Workbook* for leaders of children and young people.

## **Food safety**

For morning tea, fruit-and-vegetables is the best option. If it's cut up most kids will be happy to eat it. This helps children see that 'healthy' food is normal food to have on a daily basis. Sweet treats should be reserved for special occasions, to reinforce that they are a 'sometimes food'.

A cup of tea or coffee can be the most rewarding moment for a parent in their week! Remind them to take precautions with hot drinks, like putting them out of reach of children. You could provide travel mugs with lids.

(See the *Called to Care* Food handling fact sheet).

## People safety

At playgroup, children are supervised by their parents. Each child's safety is primarily the responsibility of the parent or carer with whom they attend playgroup. All regular playgroup leaders and volunteers need to be police checked. Guest speakers and other one-off visitors may attend without having clearance; however they are never left alone with children.

People not involved in the playgroup should not be permitted in the playgroup space while children are present. Discourage people from attending playgroup when they have colds, flu or other infectious diseases.

Supervision ratios for leaders of playgroup age children

Activities	0-2 years	2-5 years
General	Parents should be present	1 leader for each 3 children
Water/adventure	Parental supervision at all times	1 leader for each 3 children

## Disruptive behaviour

Some tears, screams, pushing and pulling are to be expected when you are working with young children. They can be momentarily disruptive, for the people involved, and people near them. Generally parents themselves deal with these. But playgroup leaders (because they are not personally involved in the child's behaviour) may be able to model techniques for defusing the situation than those used by parents.

Some children in your playgroup may have medical, emotional, or psychological problems that are manifest as inappropriate behaviour. Part of your duty of care includes being aware of such situations and learning from the parents or from professionals how best to deal with them.

Occasionally a child (or parent) attending playgroup will display behaviour: eg tantrums, aggression and bullying or inappropriate friendliness, that seriously disrupts the enjoyment of playgroup by the other children and families.

Attempt to avoid this by having clear behaviour expectations of all children and parents and continually recognising and praising appropriate behaviour.

Be on the lookout for potential problems and attempt distraction before the behaviour becomes a problem. An engaging program with a variety of activities is the best preventative for challenging behaviour.

Should problems arise, your first concern is the safety of all children. Remove the disruptive child to a 'time out' area for a short time. Speak with the child and parent in that safe space. Make sure they understand what you see as a problem. Decide together what to do and when the child is ready to return to regular activities.

Avoid confronting a disruptive parent on your own.

If problems persist, you may need to consult your minister or church council chairperson or the Synod's Pastoral Relations team (08) 8236 4204.

Keep a written record of incidents that have required special handling.

## Excursion safety

You may occasionally organise excursions away from the usual playgroup setting — a walk around the block or a day at the zoo. Plan these outings carefully. Make sure that they are appropriate for the children in the group.

As at regular playgroup sessions, parents are responsible for their own children on outings. However, as playgroup organisers you want to assess and minimise possible risks.

Transportation can be a major challenge for excursions. It is always best if parents provide transportation for their own children, as their cars will have compliant child capsules and seats. Playgroup team members themselves may not transport children in a vehicle that is not suitably equipped and they cannot authorise anyone else to do so.

## **Insurance**

Public Liability Insurance is important for any organisation running a playgroup. Playgroups organised by Uniting Church congregations and approved by their Church Council as a church program, are covered under the Uniting Church's insurance.

When an independent playgroup is being run on Uniting Church premises, a Certificate of Currency covering the Playgroup organiser is to be obtained by them.

When a Uniting Church is running a playgroup program using a venue belonging to someone else, a Certificate of Currency needs to be obtained from the property owner, as evidence of their Public Liability cover being in place.

If you have any queries about insurance you can contact the UC Insurance Department helpline (08) 8236 4224 or [insurance@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:insurance@sa.uca.org.au). Alternatively you can refer to the Uniting Church Insurance Service Risk Management and Insurance Handbook that your church council or office should have.



# Playgroup communication and records

Communication is a two-way thing: playgroup leaders (as representatives of the congregation) need to get to know the families and the families need to know the playgroup leaders and the organization they represent.

## **Enrolment Packet**

An enrolment packet helps with communication and shows that your playgroup is well organised and competently run.

An enrolment packet may contain: a welcome letter, a playgroup brochure, a copy of the current playgroup newsletter, the current term's program, your playgroup purpose statement, a registration form, a brochure introducing your church and its activities. You might like to include a simple gift to bless their family, eg a children's storybook, a voucher for a local shop, hand cream sample pack or a few chocolates.

## **Registration**

A registration form requests the contact and medical information that you need to ensure the appropriate care of children and parents. It may also include: permission for the child to participate, permission for the child to be photographed and a privacy statement.

Entering the information from registration forms into a spread sheet can be a helpful way of keeping on top of changes. Keep in mind your church's privacy policy and how you will keep and store people's personal information.

There are example playgroup registration forms in the appendix to this document

## **Welcome and Sign-in sheet**

Once you have received their registration form you can put participants' names on a weekly sign-in sheet. This helps families feel that they are expected and welcome. It also lets you know when families are missing and to follow up on them to offer support if needed.

A sign-in sheet also helps other parents who may have forgotten names to do a quick check as a reminder!

There's an example sign in sheet in the Appendix 1/5.

## **Name tags**

Some groups have name tags, but many find the sharp corners a hazard with babies. It may be better to simply write names on strips of masking tape (or sticky labels) which can be attached to the back of young children.

Distinctive Name tags identifying playgroup volunteers can help with security and help newcomers recognize who to go to with questions.

## **Newsletters**

A newsletter (either printed or emailed) can inform parents about what exciting things are happening in the playgroup and the church. It's also the ideal spot to promote up-coming events and fundraisers, to ask for donations of goods, and for prayer requests..

Letting parents know what is planned helps them prepare and dress appropriately. Many parents like to talk with their children on the way to playgroup about what is going to happen.

A newsletter is also a good way to reconnect with families you haven't seen for a while. It's good to give copies of your newsletter to congregational leaders and to your sponsors and supporters.

## **Social Media**

Use social media to share a highlight from a session, a recommended resource, requests of donation for crafts, last-minute reminders and to check on families who miss a session. But be sure not to exclude parents who are not linked in.

All playgroups provide a service to both children and their parents.

Some parents in your playgroup may be members of your church or Christians with other affiliations. Some will have little knowledge or understanding of Christianity.

Some parents may be highly competent; others may be in serious need of support and assistance with parenting. As you get to know the parents in your group, you will get an idea of what each one needs and what each one can contribute to others.

Parents who are involved in decision-making, planning and operation of playgroup will feel ownership and responsibility. This attachment is greater than when everything is done for them.

Consult your parents, for example, about what time suits them for holding playgroup. Many regular playgroups begin in the morning soon after school drop off. For baby playgroups gathering straight after lunch, 12:30 or 1:00 pm can be best.

## Faith Nurture

We know that parents have the greatest influence on the faith development of children. So intentionally evangelising or faith-nurturing playgroups share the Gospel with parents so that parents can share it with their children.

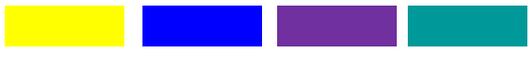
There are many ways and levels of doing this.

- First of all, the Christian ethos of the group will be a witness to both parents and children. That means that the playgroup team strives to provide a playgroup that is caring, safe, welcoming, inclusive, non-judgmental, and forgiving.
- Christian playgroup leaders will be up-front about their Christian faith: that Christ and his church are important to them; that they care for the playgroup families because Christ cares for them. When given the opportunity they will put this into words as they speak with participants. More often they will keep it in their own minds as they minister through playgroup, and they will encourage one another to do so.
- In their modelling of adult relationship with children and adult-to-adult relationships the playgroup team will attempt to behave in ways that they would like people to see as a loving, Christian way of doing things.
- The team will introduce gospel themes through story time and other activities. Although this will be clearly aimed at the understanding level of the children, parents will also be part of the audience.
- The team may give parents tracts or newsletters on an adult level that extend the theme presented to children.
- It may be appropriate to organise opportunities for parents to explore faith issues with other adults in small group discussion, Bible study or formal courses such as *Alpha* or Christian parenting courses (eg *Parenting Toolbox* [[www.theparentingplace.com](http://www.theparentingplace.com)] or *The Parenting Course* [[www.relationshipcentral.org.au](http://www.relationshipcentral.org.au)]). Make these options family-friendly by providing competent child care.

## Faith Family

Many congregations give this quarterly Christian parenting resource to playgroup families. This gift tells the parents in a gentle way that there is a faith dimension to family life. It also lets them know that the congregation cares about them and about what happens in their family. For more information contact the Children and Family Ministry Team ([children@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au)).





## Congregational involvement

There are many ways that people in your church community can be involved in playgroup. Here are some suggestions:

- Prayer — include playgroup prayer points in the congregation's weekly bulletin or general prayers in the worship service. Letting your congregation know about the playgroup's successes and needs invites them to support and be involved in playgroup.
- Visitors — give people the opportunity to come along just once — or for a longer commitment — to do what they are good at: cooking, story-telling, singing, craft, games, building, chatting, listening, etc. *Playgroup Program Ideas* suggests inviting guests to attend a session to talk with children about their special interests.
- 'Seniors' day — invite older members of the congregation to share some cross-generational activities with children and parents.
- Donations — goods and finances
- Word of mouth promotion — all members can tell young families among their friends and neighbours about the playgroup and give them copies of your playgroup brochure.
- Building and making items needed for playgroup — play equipment, smocks, etc.
- Administration — there are plenty of things that need to be typed up, photocopied, etc. that someone could do from home or in the church office.
- Preparation — Playgroup coordinators really appreciate having someone to call on to help with preparation of activities, crafts, food etc.
- Maintenance and cleaning — some people who are uncomfortable working directly with young children may be happy to assist with the tasks of creating a safe, clean environment for the playgroup.
- Consultants — people in the congregation may be called on to assist with specific needs of playgroup families, eg those from different ethnic groups could provide language help to new Australians from their region; those with budgeting or home-making skills may assist families needing that kind of help; those with social services knowledge can help families obtain the services they need.

Be sure to thank anyone one who supports your playgroup. A card from the kids is a wonderful way of doing this.

Report — include playgroup news (not just requests for help) in the church's newsletter or weekly bulletin.

Report to the church council regularly — not just when you need something. Playgroup is a ministry to your local community by your church. Reporting to council is necessary because the church is the insuring agent for the playgroup. It is also a courtesy and keeps church leadership interested in the playgroup ministry.

Display evidence of what's happening in playgroup — photos and craft work — where members of the congregation can see it. Display evidence of what the congregation is doing where playgroup parents and children can see it.

Have a time in the congregation's worship at least once a year to 'commission' and or recognise and thank the playgroup team and everyone who has helped with playgroup.

Organise at least one worship service a term to which playgroup families can be specially invited and where they will feel particularly welcomed and encouraged.



## Promoting your playgroup

Your playgroup purpose statement (see page 6) is a great tool for promoting your playgroup. This statement gives new families an idea of what to expect. It can be used on any printed materials relating to playgroup. It is also a script (or an outline) that people can use when talking about playgroup to people in the community. If your playgroup includes faith-based components, this needs to be clearly stated in your promotional materials.

### Posters

A poster about your playgroup could be displayed at your local library, shops, school, preschool or cafe.

A poster should tell people what to expect at your playgroup (use your purpose statement or dot points listing what happens at a regular session), the day/s and time/s of sessions, the playgroup location, costs and a person to contact for information.

### Postcards, flyers and brochures

Playgroup brochures are handy to leave in cafes, schools, dentist and doctors' surgeries and your local council office. They are also good to have at the church office. If someone drops in to enquire about playgroup, the brochure provides the person in the office with accurate information. It is also something for the enquirer to take away with them.

Postcards and flyers can be a smaller version of the posters with the same information.

Make sure that any advertising materials in circulation contain up-to-date information.

### Advertising in publications

Many community newsletters and newspapers allow not-for-profit groups to advertise for free. These adverts need to be brief. Here is an example:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BELLEVIEW BABY PLAYGROUP</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Come and enjoy some time with your baby and other parents for songs, play and a coffee. Wednesdays 12:30-2:00pm during school term. A gold coin donation is appreciated.</p>
--

Newletters and newspapers are also looking for news. A news story accompanied with a photo of a happy child has a good chance of being published — if the article is really news (of interest beyond your immediately program and church) and is well written. Make friends with a local news reporter or with the editor.

### Banners

Banners advertising playgroup can be hung on blank walls of the church building or suspended from posts or trees throughout the week. Banners can be professionally printed. They are also fairly easy to create by painting on canvas or plastic. You may have the children and parents make a coloured hand print on the banner. Include on your banner the name of your playgroup and when it meets.

### Sandwich boards

A sandwich board can be put out during the playgroup session. It tells parents that they can drop in as the session is on. The board could simply have the playgroup name and an arrow or directions of where to enter and the session time. Check with your local council about regulations regarding placing sandwich boards on public walkways.

## Websites

If your church has a website it is important to have current playgroup information listed on the website. Photos they can be added, but get parents' permission before uploading any photos and never use full names of children.

The Uniting Church SA hosts a list of playgroups run by Uniting Churches across South Australia. <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/parents/find-a-playgroup/> The listing is free. All you need to do is email [children@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au) the following details:

Suburb:

Name of playgroup

Venue:

Day and time of sessions:

Contact:

(Please check that the person is willing to have their name and details on the website.)

Playgroup SA Affiliated: No/Yes

Other Info: eg, age group, what to bring

The listing is regularly updated, so notify [children@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au) of changes to your playgroup status.



# Playgroup sessions

Having a routine and predictable schedule for playgroup is one aspect of providing a safe, comfortable environment. It will help both children and parents settle in and have a sense of belonging and ownership: 'this is how we do things at my playgroup'.

A schedule provides a framework in which the team can provide a wide range of activities.

Here are some possible schedules for playgroup sessions ranging from 1 hour to 2.5 hours.

Free play	20
Activity time	15
Story time	5
Snack	10
Song and Goodbye	10
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>60 min</b>

Free play	20
Song and dance time	10
Activity time	30
Snack	10
Story time	10
Group and Goodbye	10
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>90 min</b>

Free play	30
Group time	5
Activity time	40
Quiet time	5
Snack	10
Story time	10
Activity time	35
Song and dance time	10
Goodbye	5
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>150 min</b>

Free play	20
Group time	5
Activity time	35
Snack	10
Story time	5
Activity time	20
Song and dance time	10
Goodbye	5
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>120 min</b>

## Welcome time

Establish a routine for welcoming regular group members: as parents and children arrive, a playgroup leader welcomes them, goes through a sign-in and/or name tag procedure and directs families to a free play area.

Establish a routine for welcoming new families: give them any handbook, program or other written information you have available. Introduce the new family to at least one other regular family who will spend the session with them helping them understand the way you operate.

If your playgroup includes parents who are not fluent in English or who do not read well, organise a buddy system that pairs this family with another family that can support them.

### Faith enrichment

Team members build relationships with the families who attend.

Team members aim to help all participants feel comfortable in the church surroundings. They may find opportunities to explain how different parts of the church building are used at other times.

Team members may encourage the congregation to have decoration that will interest people who come to playgroup and give the playgroup team a starting point for talking about the gospel or the work of the church.

## Free play time

Free play is unstructured time when children and parents can play and interact with one another and with some toys — indoors and/or outdoors.

The purpose of free play time is

- to help parents and children settle into the group environment in a natural way
- to give children power to choose their own activities and to interact with others as they choose.
- to enjoy time together.

## Group time

The purpose of group time (particularly at the start of a session) is

- to develop a sense of community
- to prepare parents and children for what will be happening at playgroup on the day
- to give children a taste of what they will experience in more formal educational settings.

Establish a routine for group time. Use a sound signal (eg a bell) to gather all the children and parents together. Children may sit on a mat. Encourage parents, where possible to sit with them.

In this time, a team member may

- welcome everyone
- acknowledge any birthdays or other special events in the lives of the community
- introduce the theme for the day
- provide parents with what they need to know about activity centres.

### Faith enrichment

The theme for the day may be a Bible text or the key Faith Concept from *Playgroup Program Ideas*.

## Activity time

The purpose of activity centres is

- to help children explore, learn and develop new skills and understandings
- to model to parents a range of activities they may be able to do with their own children
- to encourage parents to help their own children learn and gain new experiences
- to give children some power to choose their own activities
- to have fun together.

Establish a routine for activity time.

Activity time can be organised around a variety of Activity Centres: specific activities set up in designated areas. See the section on Activity Centres (page 31).

## Quiet time

The purpose of quiet time in a longer playgroup format is

- to provide a quiet break from more strenuous activities
- to model to parents a range of quiet activities they might use with their own children.

Establish a routine for quiet time. Use a sound signal (eg a bell) to draw children and parents together for quiet time.

Find your own way of doing quiet time, eg

- Children lie down, close eyes and stay as still as they can as they listen to quiet music
- Children lie down and parents give them a gentle massage while quiet music plays
- Children sit on parent's laps for a cuddle and quiet movement to quiet music.

### Faith enrichment

Use recorded Christian music, lullabies or quiet children's songs.

## Snack time

The purpose of snack time is

- to provide nourishment for children
- to help children develop a taste for a variety of healthy foods
- to model to parents a range of useful mealtime routines.

Establish a routine for snack time. Here is one way of organising it:

- Use a sound signal (eg bell) to announce snack time
- Parents supervise their own children washing hands as they come to the snack space
- Gather children around a low table or a picnic mat
- Acknowledge the helpers/parents who have prepared the food and God who provided it.

### Faith enrichment

Introduce a simple spoken or sung table grace that you use regularly at playgroup and which parents can use at mealtime at home, eg

For health and friends for food to eat  
we thank you, God. Amen.

- If the day's snack relates to the day's theme, explain the connection
- Parents serve each child their own small bowl of finger food
- Children remain sitting quietly until all (or nearly all) have finished
- Children take empty bowls to a collection spot
- Parents supervise own children washing hands after eating.

**NOTES:** given the range of food allergies and preferences, it may be easiest for playgroups to ask each parent to provide a suitable snack for their own child. In some cases you might encourage them to bring something that relates to the day's theme.

Parents may also have a snack at this time. If they have hot drinks, they will need to exercise special care to handle them safely around children.

## Story time

The purpose of story time is

- to model to parents a range of methods for using stories with their own children
- to help children develop language skills
- to help children develop a love of books and language
- to provide information about the theme.

Establish a routine for story time. But use a variety of methods for sharing the stories.

A team member (or volunteer parent) tells or reads a short story related to the day's theme.

Story time can be for the entire group, or it can be an activity area, where just a few children at a time interact with the story and the story-reader.

### Faith enrichment

The story may be a Bible story or another story that develops the gospel theme.

## Song and dance time

The purpose of song and dance time is:

- to help children develop musical and movement skills
- to help children and parent group members to interact together.
- to model some activities parents can do with their own children
- to enjoy music and rhythmic movement.

Establish a routine for song and dance time. Use a sound signal to call parents and children to the assembly area for song and dance time.

A team member (or a volunteer parent) leads children and parents in speaking a rhyme or singing a song related to the theme of the day. Add dance or other movement to the song.

If time allows, repeat favourite songs from previous sessions.

### Faith enrichment

The song may be related to the Bible story or theme for the day. 'Favourite songs' will include some children's gospel choruses.

## Good-bye time

The purpose of good-bye time is:

- to reflect on what has happened at playgroup
- to bring playgroup to a conclusion
- to preview what will be happening next time
- to practice good manners.

Establish a routine for good-bye time:

Use a sound signal (eg a bell) to call parents and children together.

Children sit on a mat; parents sit with them or gather around as for 'Group Time'.

Encourage children to raise hands if they would like to speak.

A team member asks:

- What was playgroup about today?
- What was the best thing about playgroup today?
- Who do we need to thank at playgroup today?

A team member tells children what will be happening next time and gives parents any needed information or reminders.

You may sing a special good-bye song and wave to children as they leave.

### Faith enrichment

Playgroup may end with a prayer and blessing, eg

Invite those parents who want their children to have a blessing to stand with you in a circle. Say a simple prayer, eg.

*Thank you, God, for playgroup today.*

*Thank you for (the topic and its relevance to kids).*

*Thank you that you love us and look after us.*

Insert any special prayer requests.

*Please keep all the children [or names of the children]*

*and their parents safe and happy*

*until we come together again. Amen.*

*Turn to the person beside you and give them a good-bye hug.*

You may also provide parents with information about church worship, Sunday children's programs and other activities of the church.

# Playgroup session themes

Having a theme for each session of playgroup gives the team a framework for selecting activities for the session. A theme or 'day' also builds a sense of anticipation for parents and children.

The number of possible themes is unlimited. But themes should relate to and extend the experience of the children and families in your playgroup.

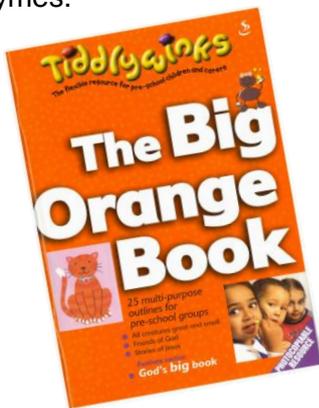
Playgroup themes may deal with things like:

- animals
- colours
- community helpers
- my body
- transportation
- sports
- holidays
- plants.

See Appendix ½ for a scheme of themes included in UCSA's *Playgroup Program Ideas*.

Other resources for developing session themes include:

**Tiddlywinks:** Scripture Union's Bible-based resources are clearly linked with Early Learning Goals. Each book contains 25 multi-purpose outlines with ideas for play, prayer, craft, stories and rhymes.

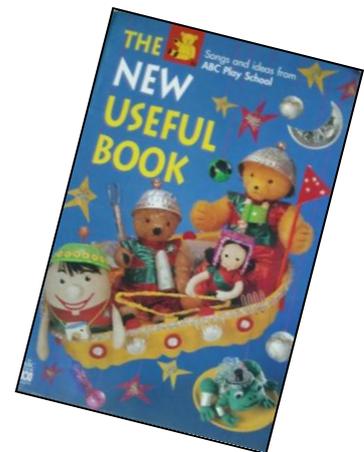


- *The Big Orange Book* themes: All creatures great and small; Friends of God; Stories of Jesus
- *The Big Green Book* themes: God's wonderful world, God gives us people, Let's find out about Jesus, God knows when I am feeling ... happy, cross, sad, shy, scared
- *The Big Yellow Book* Themes: Easter, God gives us families, Friends of Jesus, weather.
- *The Big Red Book* themes: Christmas, People we meet, stories Jesus told, God gives us food.
- *The Big Purple Book* Themes: Jesus loves me, God loves it when ... I make music, sing, dance, look at books, I'm me, Friends and followers (mostly Paul stories)

**Play School:** Australia's longest-running children's television show is itself a good resource for playgroup leaders. It models good presentation methods, appropriate language to use with pre-school children and ways using a variety of activities to develop a theme.

Play School songbooks and CDs give you access to songs from the program that may be familiar to children and parents.

*The New Useful Book*, (Songs and Ideas from Play School, by Henrietta Clark, contains words and melody lines for many popular children's songs. Songs and related activities are arranged by themes.





## Playgroup activity centres

Activity centres are designated spaces where children and parents can engage in a range of different experiences. Families move from centre to centre at their own pace. Centres can be separate rooms or areas marked by tables, room dividers or rugs.

The number of centres depends on the length of your program, eg for a 90 minute program, aim to have at least 5 centres; 120 min (6 centres); 150 min (7 centres); 180 min (9 centres)

The number of centres you have operating *at any one time* depends on the number of families in your group. You will generally not have more than four families at a centre at any one time. For example: if you have less than four families, you might have only one centre open at a time and the families move together from centre to centre. If you have four to ten families, you might have three centres open at any time.

You will need to have a playgroup team member at most activity centres. At some centres all that is required is an instruction sheet for parents, allowing one team member to supervise several centres.

Here are some of the activity centres you might include in your playgroup program. Use the same selection of centres, in the same location, week by week to help with familiarity and routine. You might rotate and change one or two of the areas from time to time.

Some of the centres will offer the same activity week after week. Others will have quite different (surprise) activities each time.

**Art centre (studio)** — this centre encourages children to express themselves and experiment with the use of various art media. The art centre provides one medium each time, eg paints one week, collage another week, playdough another week.

**Faith enrichment**

Parents or leaders can write the faith theme or Bible verse on the artwork that is taken home.

**Book centre (library)** — this centre encourages parents and children to explore books together. Parents can read a book/story to their own child. The centre could be set up as a borrowing library where children can select a book to take home and return the following week, thus developing habits of responsibility.

If you organise a borrowing library, you might have books for parents as well as books for children.

**Faith enrichment**

Include Bible stories and other 'Christian' books for both children and parents.

**Career centre** — this centre encourages children to relate the theme for the day to the world of work. A parent or other guest who works in a profession related to the theme of the day may talk with children about their work, show a short video clip about their work, and/or demonstrate a skill or equipment they use in their work.

**Computer centre** — this centre encourages children and parents to use simple computer programs, games and activities that are age appropriate and related to the theme of the day. It can be particularly beneficial for children who do not have access to technology at home.

**Faith enrichment**

You may introduce children and parents to some helpful Christian web sites.

**Craft centre (Workshop)** — this centre encourages children to create an item which they can take home as a reminder of the playgroup theme for the day. With parents' help they learn to manipulate a variety of craft materials, tools and techniques.

**Faith nourishment**

Parent or a leader writes the faith theme or Bible verse on a bag in which the children can transport their creation home.

**Exercise centre (Gym)** — this centre encourages children to do some active, large-muscle exercise. The gym might include an obstacle course, climbing gym, slides and swings, balancing bar or courses draw on the floor. It may involve the use of equipment or mat exercises. Unless you have a trained leader, keep these exercises very simple.

**Exploration centre (Lab)** — this centre (indoors and/or outdoors) encourages parents and children to explore (see, smell, taste, touch, manipulate) a range of items and activities related to the theme of the day.

**Friendship centre** — this centre encourages children to relate to a variety of people. It is set up with a few comfortable chairs. A 'special guest' (generally an older person) chats with children about an experience related to the theme for the day or any topic the guest of the child wants to talk about. It's good to take photos of children with the guests for the children (and guest) to take home.

**Faith enrichment**

The guests are people who can speak comfortably about their faith and the way it impacts on their life experiences.

**Garden centre** — this centre is home to a playgroup garden. It may be in a fenced-off outdoor area, a raised garden bed or simply some potted plants (indoors or outdoors). The garden may include a fruit tree or vine, but will mainly feature vegetables. The garden gives children a chance to see how the food they eat is grown and to participate in planting, caring for, harvesting preparing and eating some food. You may find your own 'Stephanie Alexander' in your congregation who would like to oversee this project.

**Faith nourishment**

A garden provides many opportunities to talk about God who gives the soil, the sunshine and rain and who makes the seeds grow. The experiences can build a sense of thankfulness.

**Home centre (Playhouse)** — this centre encourages children to act out situations or use items featured in the theme for the day. The centre can be set up like one room of a house (or it may contain a large doll house and dolls). The play can be either structured or free flowing. You may want to decorate this area with pictures of children in their homes.

**International centre** — this centre encourages children to think multi-culturally and to appreciate other languages. A parent or guest who is fluent in a language other than English uses actual items or actions to teach children a word or a simple sentence about the theme for the day in another language. If possible the parent or guest will talk briefly about how the theme topic is viewed in their culture. The centre can be decorated with photos and/or items from the selected cultural group.

**Learning centre (school)** — this centre provides experiences in counting and reading a few simple words related to the theme of the day.

**Music centre** — this centre encourages children to relate to music. It provides music for children to listen to and sing (move) along to and/or instruments children can play.

**Faith enrichment**

The music can include simple gospel songs and songs that support the Bible theme or story.

**Nature centre** — If outdoors, this centre is a space that has been left in its natural state, where children can walk in long grass, climb on rocks and logs, listen to bird and animal songs, collect leaves, find worms and bugs and generally explore at their own pace. If indoors, the nature centre is a collection of natural objects on a table or mat. Children can examine, manipulate and talk about the objects.

**Outdoor centre (playground)** — this centre contains a sand pit and outdoor play equipment that children can enjoy in their own way. It encourages children — particularly those who spend most of their time indoors — to get outside and possibly overcome any fear they have of being outdoors. In favourable weather, many of the other centres might be located outdoors.

**Performance centre (theatre)** — this centre encourages children to act out the theme (or story) of the day using puppets, dress-ups, music, dance, etc.

**Faith enrichment**

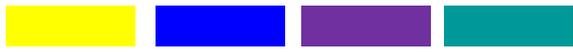
From time to time in an intentionally **faith-nurturing** playgroup, the children may be invited to share their 'performance' in a worship service or social gathering of the congregation.

**Play centre** — this centre is basically a continuation of free play (indoors or outdoors) where children can choose their own toys and experiences.

**Shopping centre** — this centre encourages children to act out situations or use items featured in the theme for the day. The centre is set up like a shop. The play can be either structured or free flowing.

Although some children are happy to stay with one activity for a long time, it's good to encourage them to sample at least one or two other activity centres.





## Evaluating your playgroup

It's good to evaluate your playgroup regularly. After each session, have a quick discussion about how it went, problems and special successes noted, what could be improved.

A couple times a year — possibly prior to reporting to your church council — have a more in-depth evaluation. Your purpose statement (page 6) is your most valuable tool for evaluating your playgroup.

The basic question is: are we doing what we set out to do? Look at:

- successes (What can we celebrate about what is happening in playgroup?)
- frustrations (What challenges are hindering the success of our playgroup and what can we do about them?)

A second question is: are we satisfying the needs of

- the children?
- the parents?
- the community?
- our team?

The answers will come from the team, from observation (what does our playgroup look like, sound like, feel like) and from the parents.

If the answer is yes, you'll probably want to continue pretty much the way you are going. But even with a yes, the team or parents might suggest some modifications that will improve it.

Statistics can help with your evaluation, but playgroup number will naturally go up and down with the changing ages of the children.

### **Too large**

A thriving playgroup may become too big.

The recommended maximum number of families per session is fifteen. This may alter, depending on your space and safety considerations, the number of volunteers you have, the level of parent involvement and the number and type of activities you provide.

If playgroup gets too big, consider:

- an additional session (a different day and/or time each week)
- a waiting list
- moving to a larger space, even if it isn't on church property.

### **Too small**

A struggling playgroup may become too small.

Many of the social advantages of playgroup are lost if the group is too small. Unless you are in an isolated area where getting together with just one other family is a boon for parents and children, a playgroup should consist of at least five families.

If your numbers are lower than this, you may need to:

- re-survey the community to see if there are families with young children needing a playgroup
- re-format your playgroup to meet the changing needs of the community
- re-promote your playgroup
- join with another playgroup
- close your group.

## **Closing down a playgroup**

If you decide to discontinue your playgroup for any reason:

- Call a meeting of all existing playgroup families, team members and a representative of your Church Council to discuss the closing down process and allocate responsibilities.
- Finalise all paper work.
- Keep accident, injury and attendance records for seven years for insurance purposes.
- Pay outstanding debts; close the bank account.
- Consider how playgroup equipment and the remaining money will be distributed.

Close playgroup with a celebration, recognising what God has done in people's lives through the playgroup.

If you would like to discuss your situation, you can contact the UCSA Children and Family Ministry Team.



Playgroup is a stage in a family's life. It ends when the youngest child 'graduates' to preschool or kindergarten. How does a congregation maintain contact with playgroup families when they move on?

The first answer is relationships. Playgroup team members will have formed personal relationships with some families. Encourage them to continue the relationship with visits, cards, phone calls, etc. They may continue praying for the families; and letting the families know they are doing so.

Plan to continue sending regular playgroup newsletters (with invitations to congregational events) to the families for at least a year after they leave playgroup.

The second answer is programs:

- Some families may be absorbed into the regular programs of the congregation: worship, education, service, or fellowship.
- The playgroup team may organise playgroup reunions, perhaps during the school holidays.
- The congregation may look at after-school or school holiday programs for children, serving the same parents who were served by playgroup at an earlier stage of their lives.
- The congregation may consider establishing a special ministry to early primary aged children and their families or one in which the families are intentionally incorporated into all-age activities, eg 'Messy Church' ([www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)).
- The congregation may establish a milestones program where former playgroup families are invited to special weekend events commemorating things like:
  - starting primary school, middle school, high school
  - first experience at organised sports (actually, organising sports opportunities may be another avenue for meeting family needs!)
  - looking at social media or drugs or alcohol
  - puberty camps for dads and boys / mums and girls
  - drivers L-plates, P-plates, full licenses
  - leaving home
- The congregation may actively support the Schools Ministry Group's Christian Pastoral Support Worker in the school attended by former playgroup children.

### Family Friendly Churches

You can find a list of Uniting Church SA Churches proactive in developing programs for children and families at [www.sa.uca.org.au/cfm/parents/find-a-family-friendly-church](http://www.sa.uca.org.au/cfm/parents/find-a-family-friendly-church).

Please check that your information is current.



### Children and Family Ministry Team, Uniting Church SA

We can provide resources for your playgroup. We send occasional emails and organise events, training, freebies and other reminders for our network of playgroup leaders.

We can also visit your playgroup and give feedback and suggestions for your playgroup or ideas for building on the ministry of the playgroup.. We can also run training for leaders and volunteers.

**E:** [children@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au)

**P:** (08) 8236 4281

**A:** Level 2, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA  
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide, SA 5001

**W:** <http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/playgroups>

### Called to Care, Uniting Church SA

Linda Vinall has information about creating safe spaces and screening leaders.

**E:** [lvinall@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:lvinall@sa.uca.org.au)

**P:** (08) 8236 4248

**A:** Level 2, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA  
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide, SA 5001

### Congregational Property, Uniting Church SA

Catherine Stock can answer your questions about the use of church property.

**E:** [cstock@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:cstock@sa.uca.org.au)

**P:** 08 8236 4240

**A:** Level 2, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA  
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide, SA 5001

### Synergy

Link into the collective size of South Australian Uniting Church organisations to negotiate competitive pricing and conditions for a range of goods and services

**E:** [synergy@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:synergy@sa.uca.org.au)

### Christian Playgroup Network

The Christian interdenominational association promotes the value of playgroups as a relevant outreach ministry for Christian churches. The website has many useful articles and resources.

**W:** <http://cpn.org.au/>

### Playgroup SA

A non-profit, community based organisation. Affiliation entitles you to benefits such as: referrals, consultant support and advice, comprehensive insurance, newsletter, PGSA Shop (play supplies) and Apra Music License

**E:** [info@playgroupsa.com.au](mailto:info@playgroupsa.com.au)

**P:** 08 8344 2722

**A:** 91 Prospect Road, Prospect, SA 5082

**W:** [www.playgroupaustralia.com.au/sa](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au/sa)

### Child & Youth Health

Check Women's and Children's Health Network site for answers to questions about parenting and child health.

**W:** [www.cyh.com.au](http://www.cyh.com.au)

**P:** 1300 364 100 (24/7 Parent Help Line)

### Parenting SA

Parenting SA supply helpful Parenting Guides about parenting and health.

**P:** 08 8303 1660

**A:** 295 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

**W:** [www.parentingsa.gov.au](http://www.parentingsa.gov.au)

### State Emergency Service

**P:** 13 2500

### Police Assistance

**P:** 131 444

### Poisons Information Service

**P:** 131 126

### CARL (Child Abuse Report Line)

The must-do place for confidential reporting of reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

**P:** 131 478

### Families SA

Emergency Crisis Care

**P:** 131 611

### Relationships SA

A community-based, not-for-profit provider of relationship support services for individuals, families and communities. Offering counselling, mediation and education programs. (11 locations throughout SA)

**W:** [www.rasa.org.au](http://www.rasa.org.au)

### Red Cross Safety Store

Baby Capsules/Car Seats fitting

**P:** 8443 9700

## **Sample Playgroup forms**

- 1/1 Family enrolment
- 1/2 Child enrolment, medical and photo permission
- 1/3 Parent medical
- 1/4 Team member information
- 1/5 Sign in sheet

## **From Playgroup Program Ideas**

- 2/1 Professional development page index
- 2/2 Scheme of themes



Date \_\_\_\_\_ Family name/s \_\_\_\_\_

## Name of playgroup



## FAMILY ENROLMENT

Please fill in the following details so that we can best care for you and your child (ren) at playgroup. By enrolling your child (ren) in this playgroup, you are giving permission for them to participate in the activities of the playgroup. You are also acknowledging that you will attend playgroup with them and will be responsible for supervising them while at playgroup.

### PRIMARY ADULT — CONTACT DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child/ren \_\_\_\_\_

### SKILLS AND INTEREST THAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH PLAYGROUP

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SECOND OR ALTERNATE ADULT — CONTACT DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child/ren \_\_\_\_\_

### SKILLS AND INTEREST THAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH PLAYGROUP

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CHILDREN YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AT PLAYGROUP

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

[Add your congregation's privacy statement. See the Called to Care Privacy Policy Manual <http://sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/downloadable-resources>]

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Family name/s \_\_\_\_\_

## Name of playgroup



## CHILD ENROLMENT

Please fill in the following details for one child, so that we can best care for you and your child at playgroup

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Parent (or legal guardian) if not the adult enrolling in playgroup

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to child \_\_\_\_\_

Any special medical/health conditions (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Allergies (eg bee stings, penicillin) \_\_\_\_\_

Any special care required (eg limited mobility, restricted diet)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tick the immunizations your child has received:

2 month    4 month    6 month    12 month    18 month    2 year    4 year

Medicare / Hospital fund: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number: \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance fund \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Family doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Permission for Medical Assistance** Please tick ✓ if you agree

I authorise the leader in charge of the group, where it is impracticable to communicate with me, to arrange for medical treatment for the above named child, as the leader may deem necessary at any time during Playgroup related activities. I accept responsibility for payment of all expenses associated with such treatment.

I further authorise the use of ambulance and/or anaesthesia by a qualified medical practitioner if in his/her judgement it is necessary.

Signature of playgroup carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Permission to take and use photographs**

I give my permission for photographs of this child to be taken at this playgroup and related playgroup activities. These photographs may be:

Printed and displayed in the playgroup area

Included in promotional materials for the playgroup — both electronic and printed

I DO NOT GIVE PERMISSION for photographs of this child to be taken, printed or displayed in any way.

Signature of playgroup carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

[Add your congregation's privacy statement. See the Called to Care Privacy Policy Manual  
<http://sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/downloadable-resources>]

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Family name/s \_\_\_\_\_

## Name of playgroup

### PARENT MEDICAL

Please fill in the following details about yourself so that we can best care for you and your child (ren) at playgroup.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick ✓ if any of the following apply

Asthma    Blackouts    Blood disorders    Migraines

Blood pressure disorders    Diabetic    Heart condition

Allergies (eg bee stings, penicillin) \_\_\_\_\_

Any special care required (eg limited mobility, needing assistance) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

Last tetanus immunization \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Medicare / Hospital fund: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number: \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance fund \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Family doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of family dentist \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**Permission for Medical Assistance** Please tick ✓ if you agree

I authorise the leader in charge of the group, where it is impracticable to communicate with me, to arrange for medical treatment, as the leader may deem necessary at any time during Playgroup or other activities. I accept responsibility for payment of all expenses associated with such treatment.

I further authorise the use of ambulance and/or anaesthesia by a qualified medical practitioner if in his/her judgement it is necessary.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

[Add your congregation's privacy statement. See the Called to Care Privacy Policy Manual  
<http://sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/downloadable-resources>]

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Family name/s \_\_\_\_\_

## Name of playgroup



### PLAYGROUP TEAM MEMBER

Please fill in the following details so that we can best care for you while you serve at playgroup.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

#### MEDICAL

Please tick ✓ if any of the following apply

Asthma    Blackouts    Blood disorders    Migraines

Blood pressure disorders    Diabetic    Heart condition

Allergies (eg bee stings, penicillin) \_\_\_\_\_

Any special care required (eg limited mobility, needing assistance) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

Last tetanus immunization \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Medicare / Hospital fund: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number: \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance fund \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Family doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of family dentist \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**Permission for Medical Assistance** Please tick ✓ if you agree

I authorise the leader in charge of the group, where it is impracticable to communicate with me, to arrange for medical treatment, as the leader may deem necessary at any time during Playgroup or other activities. I accept responsibility for payment of all expenses associated with such treatment.

I further authorise the use of ambulance and/or anaesthesia by a qualified medical practitioner if in his/her judgement it is necessary.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### QUALIFICATIONS

UCA Screening and Authority Check — Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child Safe Environments Date \_\_\_\_\_

First Aid — Type \_\_\_\_\_ Date/s \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Add your congregation's privacy statement. See the Called to Care Privacy Policy Manual

<http://sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/downloadable-resources>]

# Sign in Sheet

Sample 1: daily \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of playgroup**

**Date**

**WELCOME TO OUR PLAYGROUP**

**‘Theme’ Day**

Name	Sign in	Comments
Adams family, Sarah, Ben and Nora		
Bentley family: Heather and Suri		
Chan family: Laura, Keith, Todd, Jake		
Darley-Smith family: Bret, Kara and Karl		

Sample 2: for a whole term \_\_\_\_\_

**WELCOME TO**

**Name of playgroup**

**Term 1, 20xx**

Name	4 Feb	11 Feb	18 Feb	25 Feb	4 Mar	11 Mar	18 Mar	25 Mar	1 Apr
Bentley									
Chan									
Darley-Smith									

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

## in *Playgroup Program Ideas*

<http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/playgroups>

An understanding of the way young children develop and learn will help Playgroup team members work effectively with children and their parents. It will also help them understand the reason why various activities are suggested for a playgroup program.

The following topics are introduced in Playgroup Program Ideas as the basis for Professional Development of Playgroup teams.

### YEAR A

- Term 1 Faith development of children
- Term 2 Mathematical learning and development at Playgroup
- Term 3 Multi-cultural learning and development at Playgroup
- Term 4 Musical and Rhythmic learning and development at Playgroup

### YEAR B

- Term 1 Safety at Playgroup
- Term 2 Language learning and development at Playgroup
- Term 3 Large motor skills development at Playgroup
- Term 4 Interpersonal relationships at Playgroup

### YEAR C

- Term 1 Play at Playgroup
- Term 2 Art and visual learning and development at Playgroup
- Term 3 Small motor skills development at Playgroup
- Term 4 Multiple intelligences of Playgroup children

# A SCHEME OF THEMES

	(1) A special time or day	(2) A special time or day	(3) A colour or element	(4) An animal	(5) A story	(6) Travel or a musical instrument	(7) Work people do	(8) A place to visit	(9) A part of my body	(10) Clothes, room or plant	(11) Misc sport, relationship
<b>A1</b>	Australia Day	Easter	Air	Horse	<i>The Lion and the Mouse</i>	Train	Factory worker	Lake / river	Hands	Bedroom	Cricket
<b>A2</b>	Mothers Day	Queen's Birthday	Green	Frog	<i>Zacchaeus</i>	Bicycle	Cleaner	Post Office	Mouth	Blue Jeans	Please and Thank You
<b>A3</b>	Fathers Day	Book Week (Books)	Red	Chicken	<i>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</i>	Bus	Playgroup helper	Church	Hair	Tree	Art and artists
<b>A4</b>	Christmas Pageant	Christmas (Shepherds)	Mud	Fish	<i>Queen Esther</i>	Guitar	Fire fighter	Garden	Nose	Vegetable (Pumpkin)	Family
<b>B1</b>	Valentines Day	Easter	Water	Dog	<i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i>	Car	Doctor	Beach	Feet and toes	Kitchen	Caring for the world
<b>B2</b>	Anzac Day	Mothers Day	Purple	Butterfly	<i>Jairus' Daughter</i>	Airplane	Farmer	Restaurant	Eyes	Fruit (Apple)	Science & scientists
<b>B3</b>	Fathers Day	Book Week (Author)	Yellow	Guinea pig	<i>The Ugly Duckling</i>	Skates & skateboard	Driver	Park	Face	Shoes & boots	Football
<b>B4</b>	Advent	Christmas (Angels)	Pink	Lizard	<i>Solomon's Prayer</i>	Drum	Computer tech	Shopping centre	Arms	Wheat & bread	Grandparents
<b>C1</b>	Pancake Day	Easter	Sunshine & rain	Cat	<i>Three Little Pigs</i>	Boat	Teacher	Circus	Legs	Bathroom	Athletics
<b>C2</b>	May Day	Mothers Day	Orange	Bug and Spider	<i>Jesus Feeds 5000</i>	Wheelbarrow & wagon	Police	Farm	Ears	Hats	Friends at playgroup
<b>C3</b>	Fathers Day	Book Week (Library)	Blue	Kangaroo	<i>Town and Country Mice</i>	Rocket Ship	Minister	Playground	Tummy	Flowers	Numbers and counting
<b>C4</b>	Labour Day	Christmas (Star)	Brown	Bird	<i>Noah's Ark</i>	Horn	Builder	Bush	Skin	Vegetable (Peas)	Brothers and sisters