

GUNNEDAH SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP GUIDELINES

The supported playgroup project is funded by Families NSW

The supported playgroup project provides support to families within the Gunnedah community.

The project will support all families accessing the programs, those families with higher support needs can be referred to other service networks to ensure the family and children's needs are met.

All Key Activities must be addressed and Outcome gained.

Eligibility Criteria

Residents of the Gunnedah Shire, with priority given to:

- Families with limited local support networks
- People or communities who are socio/economically disadvantaged and or geographically isolated
- First time parents
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Single parents
- Teenage families
- Parents or children with disabilities

Key Activities

Provide information, options and referrals

- Provide information to families accessing playgroup regarding parenting skills and child development
- Providing information to families accessing playgroup regarding health, hygiene and safety
- Provide information to community members requesting information regarding parenting skills and child development
- Provide families and children accessing playgroups with appropriate referral if a need is identified

Provide support and / or practical assistance

- Provide practical support to families to develop social relationships and support networks
- Provide practical support to families to develop skills to cope with life events and to achieve their goals

Provide support through organised group activities and programs

- Provide a range of learning experiences to stimulate children's intellectual growth
- Model play interactions and an appropriate communication techniques
- Model acceptable behaviour management techniques to families
- Arrange for provision of an appropriate range on child and family services to meet the needs of families by negotiating with service providers
- Undertake strategies to improve access to services for ATSI and other disadvantaged groups

An increase in the school preparedness of children enrolling in Early Childhood Services

- The establishment of a transition program to early childhood services
- The involvement of parents in the development and implementation of transition projects
- The number of children with no preschool education who show school preparedness as a result of transition programs

The number of children who attend playgroup and successfully settle into an early childhood service

Key Outcomes For Families

- Parents are supported in their role
- Reduced isolation
- An improved child friendly focus
- Increased knowledge about child development, health, hygiene and safety
- An awareness of community services is developed
- Improved parent-child relationships
- Increased confidence in their parenting skills/abilities
- Improved access to appropriate services
- Children with identified needs access services
- Families who traditionally don't access services are engaged
- That they are more connected to other families
- Improved family functioning
- Stronger social / community networks
- Raise awareness of parenting issues and knowledge of child development / services available
- Increased participation by children and parents in early learning activities
- Improved developmental outcomes
- Enhanced school readiness
- Parents more confident and able to advocate for their child
- Improved relationships with early childhood services
- Increased range of support services available to families
- That collaborative relationships exist within the service system

Gunnedah Supported Playgroup Regulation and the Guiding Principles

1. All families attending must have an understanding of the **structure** and **key purpose** of the Supported Playgroup as stated in the Supported Playgroup Guidelines.
2. Families wishing to attend the Supported Playgroup must fit the eligibility criteria.
3. All families attending must be enrolled and attend a minimum of 1 playgroup per month to stay enrolled. However if the coordinator is made aware of your absence your enrolment place is kept.
4. **All activities** are set up for **parents** to **interact** and **engage** in the **activities** with their **children**.
5. Morning tea is provided to the children at this playgroup, however there will be a roster on the wall for parents to contribute to morning tea each week. Please add your name to this roster to share the responsibilities.
6. Resources can be extremely costly. Please ensure equipment is used for the purpose it is made for eg: sandpit toys are for the sandpit only, sand is very expensive to replace, children playing in the sand need to stay in the sandpit, baby equipment is for babies only etc.
7. All Hygiene Health and Safety regulations **MUST BE** Followed they are:
 - **ALL** people attending playgroup **MUST** sign **IN** and **OUT**, **this includes family or friends** that attend playgroup with parents / carers. This is for **safety reasons** and comes under the **child protection act**.
 - During the playgroup session parents / carers are **responsible** for their children and must stay with their children while at the session.
 - Children must be supervised by parents / carers when going to the toilet or just washing hands. Children **cannot** be left **unattended** in the bathroom.
 - **Hygiene regulations for food handling** are: **Everyone must wash their hands** and if helping with morning tea **must use tongs** and / or **gloves**.
 - **Hygiene regulations for nappy changing** are: Please ensure the changing area is left clean. There will be plastic shopping bags to place soiled nappies in. After changing please wash your hands.
 - Please **report** any **incidents** at playgroup as an accident report needs to be filed out.
 - When the weather is warm please bring hats for your children, sunscreen is provided.
 - There is a first aid kit on top of the microwave in the kitchen if you need to use it.
 - There is strictly **NO SMOKING** on the Tafe grounds. **Remember** your **children have to be supervised at all times**.