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1 Foundation

Playgroup NSW is a not-for-profit community organisation that aims to provide the highest quality support for early years parenting, play and development.

1.1 Purpose

Playgroup NSW provides the support for all families with babies and children under six:

- to participate in relevant playgroups
- develop social and community connections, and
- access related learning resources and family support services

1.2 Vision

Our community has access to the highest quality support for early years parenting, play and development

1.3 Values

Playgroup NSW values strong and sustainable communities that nurture:

- Confident and positive parenting
- Acceptance of difference and the encouragement of diversity
- Positive interactions between children and adults
- Volunteering and mutual support
- Welcome learning and play environments for all

1.4 Objectives

- Promote and encourage development of Playgroups throughout NSW
- Provide opportunity for parents to develop and support networks and gain more enjoyment, confidence and skills in their role as parents
- Ensure all Playgroups encourage increased adult/child interaction and provide a stimulating environment in which children can develop creatively, socially, mentally and physically at their own rate
- Bring to parents, knowledge of child development, education and emotional needs
- To make available to parents/carers of children from birth to six years opportunities to develop through involving themselves with full responsibility and running of all and any aspects of each Playgroup.
- To advise, assist and encourage the activities of existing and new Playgroups and ensure that new Playgroups are established according to the Association's requirements.

- To develop public awareness of the Playgroup movement and develop conscience concerning the welfare of younger children.
- To liaise with parents, interpret their needs and represent their views to organisations and Government Departments with purposes and responsibilities related to Playgroups.
- To work in close co-operation with other organisations interested in the welfare of young children and families.
- To provide direct relief of disability, poverty or helplessness for children and their families.

2 Your Playgroup

A Playgroup is an informal gathering of people with young children from birth to six years old. Playgroup sessions take place weekly for around two hours and are held at local venues such as a community centres, schools, church or scout halls, parks, council or any other appropriate community facility.

A Playgroup is a place for playing, growing, making friends and having fun for children and their parents and/or carers. Young children learn best in the presence of happy, supportive and involved adults. Playgroup is all about cooperation, tolerance, creativity, making friends and having fun together.

There is no fixed procedure for a Playgroup, but the aim is for parent and child participation. A Playgroup belongs to everyone who attends, so everyone has an equal say in how it operates. Playgroups should always be fun, creating an atmosphere in which children can safely learn and experiment through play while creating and making friends.

The Playgroup will be responsible for the management of its own day to day affairs, provided that its actions do not conflict with the Objectives and Rules of Playgroup NSW.

2.1 Outcomes from Playgroup

- Opportunities for parents/carers of children under school age to involve themselves in the full responsibility and running of all aspects of the Playgroup
- A stimulating environment in which children can develop creatively, socially, mentally and physically at their own rate
- Opportunities for parents to develop support networks

2.2 Types of playgroups

- Baby Playgroups

- Toddler Playgroups
- Fathers' Playgroups
- Groups where language other than English is spoken
- Groups of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Montessori/Waldorf/Steiner groups
- Groups with children with a disability
- Grandparents' groups
- Intergenerational groups
- Groups for Indigenous families
- Groups for families with a particular need or special interest
- Supported playgroups
- And more...

3. Running Your Playgroup

The Playgroup may either be a non committee Playgroup or administered by a committee. It is the decision of the majority of Playgroup members as to which method they will use. The decision to be a non committee Playgroup or a committee managed Playgroup must be reviewed annually at the Playgroup's Annual General Meeting

3.0.1 Non Committee Playgroups

- Non Committee Playgroups must provide Playgroup NSW with at least two designated contacts (minimum of two)
 - The *Playgroup Contact* is the liaison between the Playgroup and Playgroup NSW and, where applicable, the Zone. The details of the designated contact will be given to potential new members and placed on the Playgroup NSW web site
 - The *Playgroup Financial Contact* is the liaison between the Playgroup and Playgroup NSW and, where applicable, the Zone for all their financial matters
 - A *Contact* assists the Playgroup and Financial Contact in the management of day to day affairs (only required should there be a third contact)
 - These positions can be held for a minimum of three months to a maximum of one year, although the same person can be appointed again by the Playgroup at a General Meeting
 - Appointment of these Contacts must be made at a General Meeting of the Playgroup
 - Playgroup NSW must be informed of any changes to these positions within 14 days

3.0.2 Committee Playgroups

- A Committee Playgroup has a more formal committee structure comprising a Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer

- These positions are elected at the Playgroup's Annual General Meeting each year
- Playgroup NSW must be informed of any changes to these positions within 14 days
- These positions are for the term of one year
- These positions are all declared vacant at the AGM. Incumbents may re-nominate for these positions. Contact/Committee members shall serve no more than a total of four consecutive years in Contact/Committee positions without specific approval from the Playgroup NSW. Any period served greater than six months shall be deemed to be a full year
- As required, these positions may be elected throughout the year at a General Meeting of the Playgroup
- All Contact/Committee members must be members of Playgroup NSW for the length of their term
- No Contact/Committee member shall receive remuneration or other financial benefit, except for reimbursement of out of pocket expenses
- Multisession Playgroups are required to have at least one nominated day leader for each session

3.1 Decision Making

All decisions affecting the daily running of the Playgroup must be voted on at a meeting of the Playgroup. This includes all payments and purchases made on behalf of the Playgroup excluding reimbursement of petty cash and rent payments. A record of the meeting (minutes) should be kept at the Playgroup and a copy sent to Playgroup NSW.

3.2 Confidentiality

The Playgroup must not give personal details of any member to a third party without the prior approval of the member; this includes giving the details to other Playgroup members.

The Playgroup must not sell or provide personal details of any member/s to any commercial business.

The Playgroup must store all members' personal details in a secure area that can not be accessed by others

The Playgroup must destroy all past member's personal details in a safe manner ensuring that no third party has access to the destroyed records

3.3 Code of conduct

Every member, by their attendance at Playgroup, agree to abide by the Playgroup NSW Code of Conduct when they are attending Playgroup and when they represent their Playgroup, Zone or Playgroup NSW at any function or meeting. The code of conduct can be found in the Playgroup Manual

3.4 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and Playgroup interest or public interest.

In cases where a Playgroup member has a conflict of interest they must declare this to the rest of the Playgroup members and stand down from any decisions that are made with relation to the area of conflict.

3.5 Meetings

3.5.1 General Meetings

- The Playgroup will hold General Meetings as required to conduct the business of the Playgroup
- By agreement of the members Playgroup meetings will be held as required for the day to day functioning of the Playgroup
- The Contacts/Committee will inform members of the date, time and place for the meetings – taking into account the needs of the members of the Playgroup
- At least 14 days written notice of all Meetings, including an agenda of items to be discussed at the meeting, shall be given to all Playgroup members
- All members of the Playgroup may attend and speak at the meetings
- At General Meetings and the Annual General Meeting of the playgroup, the Contacts/Committee shall provide minutes and actions items of the previous meeting, and business transacted since the last meeting
- Playgroup members must be financial members of Playgroup NSW to have voting rights at a Playgroup meeting
- Proposals are deemed carried if greater than 50% of votes taken by a show of hands are for the proposal
- Where the proposal is to split into two or more Playgroups, at least 75% of votes received must be in favour of the resolution. Members eligible to vote must have each been members of the original Playgroup for at least 6 months
- The Playgroup may elect a sub committee at a General Meeting to help with the running of the Playgroups, by specifying the sub-committee members, functions and term.
- Minutes of the meeting will be taken for all Playgroup meetings and made available to all Playgroup members within 14 days
- A report will be presented at General and Annual General Meetings of the Playgroup's current financial status. This report must include any monies received and any monies spent on behalf of the Playgroup

3.5.2 Annual General Meetings

- An Annual General Meeting of Playgroup must be held within 4 weeks of the end of the financial year. The financial year is 1st October to 30th September each year
- A reviewed Annual Financial Statement must be presented at this meeting
- The Playgroup must consider the type of Playgroup – non committee or committee – that the Playgroup would like to be
- The election of committee positions (if applicable) and all other positions are held at this time for the following year

3.5.3 Quorum

A fixed minimum number of current financial members of Playgroup NSW must be present at a meeting before any official business may be transacted or a decision taken therein becomes binding.

Where a Playgroup has more than one session, at least four members, representing at least 60% of sessions, constitutes a quorum at General Meetings. For single session Playgroups, the quorum is at least three members or 25% of the memberships (whichever is lesser). At least one committee member or contact must be present for a quorum to be present.

3.5.4 Voting

Any financial member of Playgroup NSW who has attended more than three sessions of the Playgroup has the right to vote at the general meetings of the Playgroup, unless other wise specified in the charter. One vote per member.

3.5.5 Minutes

Minutes of meetings will be taken for every meeting of the Playgroup. The minutes will record who attended and who could not attend and apologised, all decisions made and all approvals of payments and purchases. The minutes will also record all reports, including a financial report, presented to the meeting

Copies of minutes should be kept on file by the Playgroup and a copy sent to Playgroup NSW. These minutes should be ratified at the next meeting.

3.6 Record Keeping

- ANY INCIDENT INVOLVING A CHILD must be confidentially stored until the child is 25 years old
- Incidents involving members of the public, including students and volunteers or other persons who are not employees – must be retained for a minimum of 15 years after action is completed, or upon expiry of statutory limitation periods
- FINANCIAL RECORDS in paper or electronic form detailing income and expenditure of the Playgroup must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.
- MINUTES OF MEETINGS must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

Remember - if you forward these documents to the Playgroup NSW membership support team they will ensure a record is kept with your playgroup records.

4 Being a Playgroup

4.1 Best practice Playgroups

- Are non-denominational, non-political, non-profit making and shall comply with the appropriate Anti-discrimination Legislation
- Hold the vision of Playgroup NSW
- Abide by all the guidelines of Playgroup NSW
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment for all families with children under six years to access the highest quality support for early years parenting, play, socialising and development.
- Keep a toy and equipment inventory. This inventory must be updated annually and a copy sent to Playgroup NSW. This is used for any insurance claims.
- Keep a Day Book to record both adults and children who have attended sessions and any incidents at Playgroup. Playgroup NSW will provide a day book on request. For large sessions it is suggested that a separate day book can be kept for each session. Playgroup NSW can review the Day Book of any Playgroup on request
- Use the approved logo provided by Playgroup NSW for all promotions, correspondence (including emails), and social media
- Ensure that every family/carer who attends a Playgroup is a member of Playgroup NSW. New attendees may visit twice before they must join Playgroup NSW. A membership is for one year from payment date for a fee determined by the Board of Playgroup NSW, currently \$39
- Memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable from member to member; however memberships are transferable across all States and Territories within Australia

- By paying membership to Playgroup NSW, every member accepts the principles of Playgroup NSW and agrees to comply with and be bound by the Playgroup Charter
- No member shall be absolved from observance of the Objects and Rules of Playgroup NSW and the Playgroup Charter on the plea that they have not read the documents
- Every member is directly responsible for the children under their care (i.e. the children they bring to Playgroup). However, it is the responsibility of all members to supervise and maintain a safe environment for all attending children at all times. Therefore, wherever there are groups or individual children playing, there must be direct adult supervision.

The Playgroup will NOT:

- Enter into any Employer/Employee relationships
- Borrow money for any purpose
- Enter into any Legally Binding agreements either verbal or written without the prior approval of Playgroup NSW and their insurance company
- Use their name and logo or the name Playgroup NSW for any commercial purpose without the prior written approval of Playgroup NSW

4.2 Finance

- The Playgroup Contacts/Committee shall be signatories to the cheque account
- The Playgroup must operate only one cheque account in its own name with a minimum any two to sign
- The Playgroup has the right to charge every attending member a fee to help cover the cost of running the Playgroup. This fee may be collected weekly or per school term. This fee should be kept to a minimum so it does not restrict attendance
- All monies received shall be receipted and banked in a timely manner
- All payments in excess of \$50 shall be paid by cheque. All cheques must be signed by the two contacts or two of the three committee members
- No purchases or payments may be made without the prior approval of the Playgroup at a general meeting, except for reimbursement of petty cash and payment of rent
- The financial year is 1st October to 30th September each year
- The Playgroup shall have all accounts, receipts, books and documents reviewed annually and a report must be provided to the members at the Playgroup's Annual General Meeting
- The person performing the review shall not be a member of the Playgroup Committee or closely related to any of the nominated contacts or the committee members and must have accounting or bookkeeping experience.
- The accounts will be sent to Playgroup NSW within 30 days of the AGM

4.3 Changes to a Playgroup

- Playgroup NSW can be consulted for support and advice when a playgroup is considering changes such as
 - Splitting (refer also to 'Meeting' section)
 - closing
 - support with promotion, events
 - increasing membership
 - and much more
- When a Playgroup splits, each Playgroup shall have a different name. The name of the original Playgroup may be retained by the group remaining in the original premises, or, where both or all groups are moving premises, by the group with the most members
- When the Playgroup closes, all assets and funds after payment of expenses and liabilities, shall be disbursed as determined by Playgroup NSW
 - The Playgroup must inform Playgroup NSW within 14 days of their decision to close
 - The Playgroup must follow all instructions of Playgroup NSW when closing the Playgroup

4.4 Teamwork

The Playgroup will work collaboratively with its members in order to meet the Playgroup's needs, provide a welcoming environment, share roles and responsibilities and support other parents and children who attend.

4.5 Duties

To provide the highest quality support for the attending members, the Playgroup members will fulfil a number of key duties, which can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Where required, develop local policies to address the needs of the Playgroup eg hot drinks, concerning behaviour of children and adults, and appropriate food to bring to Playgroup etc
- Attend training sessions offered by Playgroup NSW to increase the Playgroups knowledge about how to run the best Playgroup and the most up to date current information on insurance matters. Training is offered through a number of modes including face to face and teleconference
- Have available the most current resources from Playgroup NSW, including the Playgroup Manual and the latest Insurance brochure. This information is updated usually via the coordinator or key contact. Updates should be shared with all members
- Provide age appropriate activities for the children attending, modifying as required

- Provide a safe environment; this includes regular checking toys and equipment for cleanness and damage. All damaged toys and equipment must be removed to reduce injury
- Encourage adults to actively engage with the children, by providing activities that promote positive interaction between adult and child
- Playgroup NSW encourages Playgroups to go on excursions, and to hold events to attract new members. Playgroups must refer to the Playgroup NSW Day Book or the latest Insurance Brochure for the correct procedure for events and excursions
- Playgroups are encouraged to seek grants to reduce the need to fundraise. Grants will be lodged by Playgroup NSW on behalf of the Playgroup by arrangement. Assistance will be given to Playgroups to submit grants and support the Playgroup to ensure funding guidelines are met.

5 Conflict Resolution

Conflict can be defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Generally, there is some level of difference in the positions of the two parties involved in the conflict.

Playgroup NSW will assist the Playgroup to resolve conflicts within the Playgroup. All parties concerned need to enter the resolution process with the intention to resolve the conflict. Please refer to the Playgroup NSW Playgroup Manual for the conflict resolution process.

6 Non Observance

Playgroup NSW endeavours to work with all Playgroups, however breaches of the charter may result in disaffiliation.

We all agree how important play is to a child. It helps develop physical skills, teaches problem solving and communication. And, it's great fun.

We also agree how important social interaction is to parents of young children. It helps you navigate your way and feel part of a community.

Thanks for being part of Playgroup!