

Supported parent groups and playgroups

Program guidelines and funding submission details 2005

Office for Children

Published by the Office of Children, Victorian Government Department of Human Services
Melbourne, Victoria

© Copyright State of Victoria 2005

This publication is copyright, no part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

This document may also be downloaded from the Department of Human Services website at:
www.beststart.vic.gov.au

Authorised by the State Government of Victoria, 555 Collins Street, Melbourne. Printed by Department of Human Services.

Contents

Introduction	3
The Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative.....	3
The importance of the early years – the four key evidence themes	3
Policy context	4
Service context	7
About playgroups and parent groups.....	9
Playgroups	9
Supported playgroups	9
Parent groups	9
Supported parent groups.....	9
Target group	10
Objectives	10
Service Model	10
Performance measures	11
Additional support	11
Submission specifications	12
About the Department of Human Services	14
Useful resources	15
Web links	15
Office for Children	15
Templates	16

Introduction

The Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative

The Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative was announced in the Victorian Government's social policy statement, *A Fairer Victoria*, as part of a four-year, \$101.8 million package to give children the best start in life.

It aims to provide quality play opportunities at a critical time in a child's development (0–3 years of age). These opportunities will foster children's language development, develop motor skills and expose children to sensory experiences. It will also provide families with opportunities to establish friendships and long-term social support structures that strengthen social networks and provide community connectedness.

The Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative will target families from disadvantaged backgrounds and isolated areas and is intended to improve parents' promotion of child health and development.

The initiative is being developed in the municipalities where Best Start demonstration projects were established in order to consolidate the work of Best Start partnerships in relation to playgroups. This approach recognises that the existence of a Best Start partnership is likely to improve the effectiveness of implementing a new initiative such as this.

The funded municipalities include the cities of Ballarat, Casey, Frankston, Greater Geelong, Hume, Maribyrnong, Greater Shepparton and Whittlesea, the Rural City of Swan Hill and the Shires of Wellington and Yarra Ranges (from 2005–06) and the Rural City of Horsham, Shire of Baw Baw and the City of LaTrobe (from 2006–07).

The importance of the early years – the four key evidence themes¹

Early childhood literature provides substantial evidence that:

- the early years are crucial in setting the stage for later life
- young children develop through their relationships with others
- children's development is shaped by the balance between risk and protective factors
- supporting families effectively requires a comprehensive, coordinated family-centred service system.

Setting the stage for later life

Brain research shows that the early years of development – from conception to age six, and particularly the first three years – provide the basis for the development of competence, coping and emotional skills that affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life. There is growing evidence that good nutrition, nurturing and responsive care-giving in these early years, combined with high quality early childhood development programs, can improve the long-term outcomes for all children's health, development, learning and wellbeing.

Developing through relationships with others

All young children's learning and development occurs in the context of their relationships with their caregivers. These early experiences form characteristic ways of relating to other people and of coping with the ebb and flow of emotions. These patterns of behaviour are not just psychological tendencies, they are actually built into the architecture and physiology of children's brains.

The balance between risk and protective factors

Children's development is shaped by the balance between factors known to place development

¹ Adapted from the *Municipal Early Years Framework 2005*

at risk and those known to have protective properties. Children exposed to multiple risk factors become vulnerable to developmental problems of health, learning and wellbeing, whereas those exposed to protective factors are more likely to be resilient in the face of environmental adversities. These determinants of child development have an impact at all levels: family, neighbourhood, community and economy. To ensure that more children develop well, we need to reduce the factors that place them at risk and promote those that are protective. Among other things, this means building more child and family friendly communities.²

Providing a comprehensive, coordinated family-centred service system

To achieve better outcomes for children and families, we need an integrated system of services that can respond to the emerging needs of children and families in local community settings. To become more effective, service systems need to adopt a family-centred approach to working with families, a partnership approach to working with communities, and a strength-based approach to policy and service development. Better outcomes are also achieved when services are comprehensive and inclusive.

The challenge is to adopt an ecological perspective, collectively addressing all of the factors that impact on child and family functioning, rather than continuing to provide separate services that focus on a single factor or problem. To achieve a holistic, integrated system, we need to adopt an approach that is cross-sectoral, multilevel, and has strong local leadership.

This evidence can inform the development of early years services through planning, in partnership with the community and government, for services and activities that are:

- sufficient in number to meet the need
- high quality and developmentally appropriate
- across the range of education, care and health
- targeted at children at risk of long-term damage or disadvantage
- culturally appropriate
- aimed at minimising risk and strengthening protective factors
- comprehensive in nature
- strongly linked and coordinated across the universal, secondary and tertiary sectors
- able to foster participation
- family-friendly and adopt a family-centred approach to practice.

International research and experience indicate that some key activities are essential elements of a comprehensive, inclusive, accessible and effective early years service system. These include:

- improving support for parents to care for their children
- improving opportunities for good quality play, learning, child care, kindergarten and early education experiences for children, before school and during the first three years of school
- improving support for parents to strengthen their skills and capacity to promote the development and early learning of their children.

Policy context

The *Growing Victoria Together* policy (Victorian State Government, 2001, 2004) outlines the State Government's commitment to building cohesive communities and delivering high quality, accessible health and community services and high quality education and training for lifelong learning.

² A diagram of risk and protective factors with associated /protection of adverse outcomes can be found at www.dhs.vic.gov.au and the Centre for Community Child Health's publication, *A review of the early childhood literature* (Feb 2000) at website: www.rch.org.au/ccch²

The *Children First* policy (Victorian State Government, 2002) highlights the need to link universal and secondary early childhood services to improve the early identification of children at risk and to improve outcomes for children and their families. This policy includes new ways to build, strengthen and connect services, including maternal and child health, maternity, early intervention, kindergarten, child care and family support services.

The *Joining the dots* report (Premier's Children's Advisory Committee, 2004) (the PCAC report) acknowledges and supports many of the current initiatives being undertaken within the early years area, including Municipal Early Years Plans, the *Future directions of the Victorian Maternal and Child Health Service*, children's centres and reform in the family services and child protection sectors.

The government, in *Putting children first...the next steps* (Victorian State Government, 2004), its response to the PCAC report, endorsed the broad directions contained in *Joining the dots* and outlined in more detail its commitment to addressing the needs of children.

A Fairer Victoria (Victorian State Government, 2005) further outlines the State Government's commitment to improve access to vital services, reduce barriers to opportunity, and strengthen assistance for disadvantaged groups, people with disability and people with mental illnesses – thereby strengthening our community as a whole. Giving children the best start in life is a key government strategy within *A Fairer Victoria*. The Victorian State Government acknowledges that the first four years are critical to the long-term health and development of children and their future chances. Seven key actions to give children the best start in life are identified in this policy.

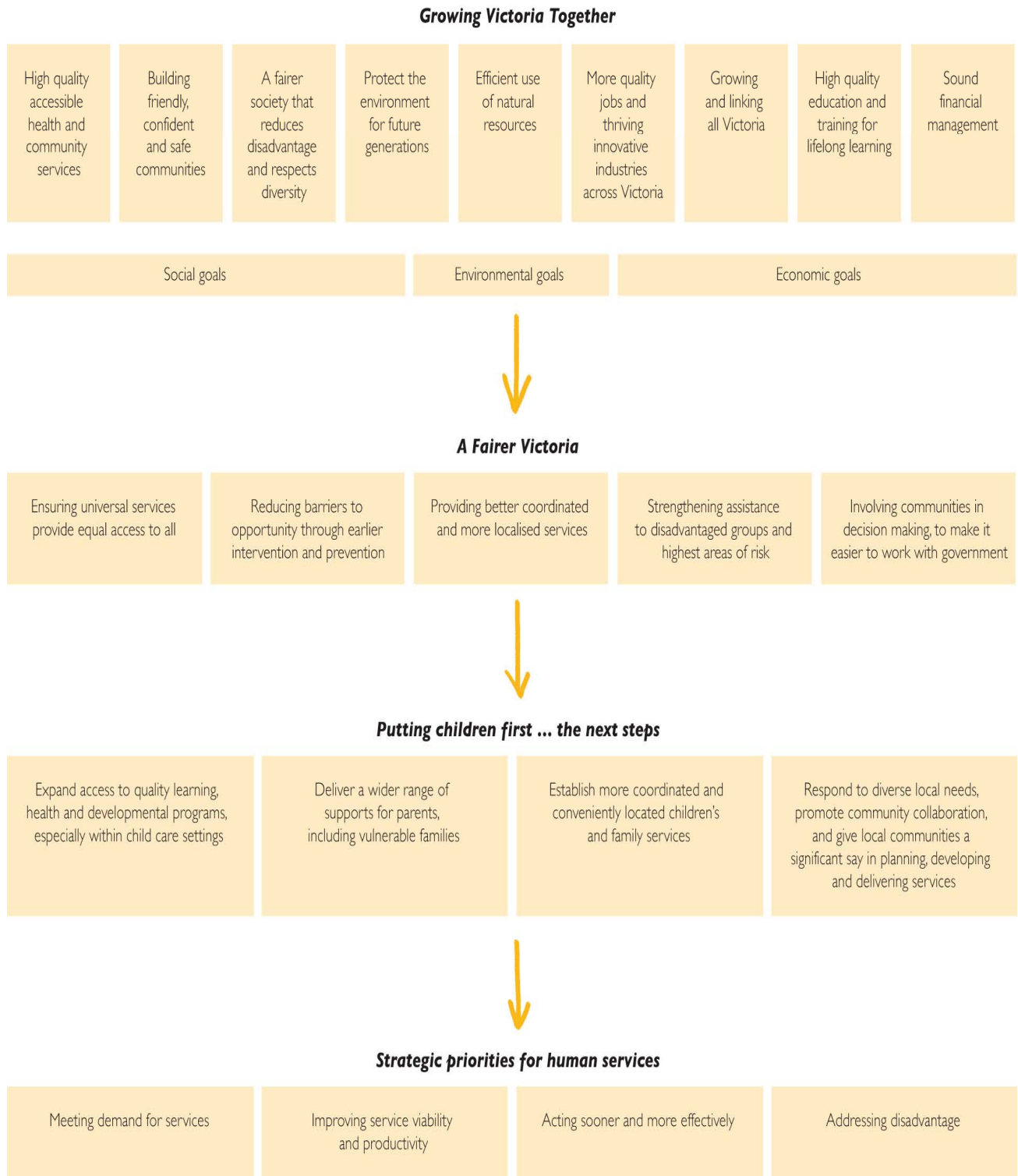
These policy statements, together with the Department of Human Services *Strategic plan for human services* (2005), provide the policy context for these guidelines. The policy context is summarised in Figure 1.

In 2005, the Department of Human Services commenced development of a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to the provision of early childhood services through the development of a Plan for Victoria's Children. This plan will signal new directions in policy, including a commitment to service integration, improved coordination and greater local flexibility. The plan will encompass the objectives identified in *Putting children first...the next steps*:

- better access to quality learning and development programs, especially those delivered in child care settings
- a wider range of supports for parents, including for vulnerable families
- more coordinated and conveniently located children's and family services
- greater opportunities for involvement in local planning.

Coupled with this is the White Paper, *Protecting Children...the next steps* (2005), which seeks to redesign the role of local service networks across Victoria to ensure a shared approach to responding to vulnerable children and their families.

Figure 1 – Policy context



Service context

Role of local government

Local government is a primary investor in early years services and infrastructure. In *Putting children first*, the government noted its intention to continue 'working closer with local government... by strengthening the role of Municipal Early Years Plans'.

A Municipal Early Years Plan is a local area plan designed to provide a strategic direction for the development and coordination of educational, care and health programs, activities and other local developments that impact on children and their families.

These plans have been designed to enable local government to work in partnership with the community across its defined roles in early years service/facility provision, planning, advocacy and community building. The Municipal Early Years Plan should provide local knowledge on which this initiative can be built.

Early years services

Early years services incorporate programs supporting the health, development and learning of young children, including kindergarten, children's centres, maternal and child health, primary school nursing, early parenting services, early childhood intervention services, kindergarten inclusion support services, Best Start and the regulation of child care.

The proposed In Home Support for Aboriginal Families initiative, linked closely to the Koori Maternity Service, will establish a new early years service that is also complementary to this initiative.

Parent groups and playgroups are already part of the mix of the early years programs available for families. The Maternal and Child Health Service is funded to provide parent groups inclusive of first-time parents as part of the flexible service capacity. Other services including early childhood intervention services, kindergarten and child care may also run parent groups or playgroups.

Best Start partnerships

Best Start aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all Victorian children from pregnancy through transition to school (0–8 years). The aims are achieved by supporting service providers to improve universal early years services, making them more responsive to local needs. A strong emphasis of Best Start is on prevention and early intervention.

Best Start partnerships make a difference to child health, development, learning and wellbeing through changes to the delivery of existing early years services, strengthening the links between those services, and integrating services where possible. These changes are likely to lead to a sustainable coordination and provision of care and support for all children and parents, irrespective of income, ethnic background, ability or geographic location.

Many Best Start partnerships established or expanded the availability of parent groups and playgroups through their action plans. It is important that the approach taken to implement this new initiative draws support from the Best Start partnership and is consistent with the Best Start approach. For more information on Best Start, refer to the *Best Start Guidelines 2005* available on the Best Start website at www.beststart.vic.gov.au

Parenting Services

Parenting services promote the independence and healthy development of families with children 0-18 years through the provision of parenting support, information, advice, referral and resources to parents and training and consultancy to professionals. They include the statewide Victorian Parenting Centre, Regional Parenting Services, Family Intervention Services and Strengthening Parent Support Programs. These services provide families with the opportunity to participate in local, effective and relevant parenting programs that focus on key transition points in the lives of children and families.

Family Services and Family Support Innovation Projects

Family Services provide a range of activities that may include the provision of: outreach, assessment, case management, counselling, casework, in-home support, (parent) group work, brokerage, as well as other support and information activities. In most cases an initial assessment will be conducted with the family to determine the level, priority and type of service required.

The Victorian Government has undertaken research on the complex and chronic problems within some families and has identified that intervening earlier to prevent child abuse and neglect is possible. The government's policy, *An Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services* (Victorian State Government, 2002), provides the framework for the Family Support Innovation Projects.

These projects aim to divert families from statutory child protection services to community-based services and minimise client renotifications and the progression of families into the child protection system.

Family Support Innovation Projects have been established in 29 local government areas, seven working specifically with Indigenous families. Twelve new projects will be established in 2006.

A funded service network is established in each project area to build an intensive working relationship among professionals involved with children and young people.

The network focuses on developing multidisciplinary relationships to analyse and determine service needs. It ensures a flexible, responsive service system exists within the local government area.

It is likely that that the children and families supported through these projects would greatly benefit from supported parent groups and playgroups.

About playgroups and parent groups

The following definitions are provided to clarify the ways in which the terms “parent group” and “playgroup” are commonly used.

Playgroups

Playgroups provide quality play opportunities at a critical time in a child’s development (0-3 years of age). Play fosters a child’s language development, develops motor skills and exposes them to sensory experiences³. Playgroups also provide families with opportunities to establish friendships and long-term social support structures that strengthen social networks and provide community connectedness⁴.

There are currently 1,731 playgroups known to Playgroup Victoria which are attended by more than 56,727 children each week. Other groups operate on an informal basis or with support from services like those identified above.

Playgroups:

- provide developmentally appropriate play experiences
- encourage growth and development
- promote wellbeing and builds life skills
- promote and enhance parenting skills
- develop social networks
- create pathways to other services.

Supported playgroups

Supported playgroups involve, or are lead by, a playgroup facilitator (also known as a co-ordinator or leader).

Parent groups

Parent groups create an opportunity for parents to meet in a non-judgmental and supportive environment to share their experiences and establish supportive networks that increase their ability to function to their full potential.

Supported parent groups

Supported parent groups also:

- create an environment of trust that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive
- provide opportunities to enhance parenting skills and understanding of children’s developmental needs
- facilitate friendships between parents/carers; encourage the social development of each parent
- implement appropriate interventions to facilitate parent’s community connectedness and independence
- create pathways to other services.

³ Early Intervention Parenting Project: Improving Access to Playgroups for all Families, Centre for Community Child Health 2003

⁴ Playgroups Manual, Playgroups Victoria 2002

Many parent groups of this nature already exist. For example, maternal and child health services run parent groups, including first time parent groups, dads groups and groups for women with postnatal depression. Family support services, early parenting centres and other secondary services, including mental health, also run broad and targeted parent support groups as part of regular education calendars.

A supported parent group and playgroup may meet the aims of both a parent group and playgroup. These sessions might commence with parents and children together for structured activities, then provide parents and children time apart, and finish with shared time again.

Target group

The supported parent groups and playgroups funded under this initiative should engage disadvantaged and isolated families who may otherwise not access these services.

Four population groups known to require particular attention are:

- Indigenous children and families
- recent/high need immigrant (including refugee) children and families
- families affected by disability
- families affected by chronic disadvantage and with complex needs.

Objectives

The objectives of the supported parent groups and playgroups initiative is to:

- promote improved outcomes for children, increase parent confidence and capacity and support the establishment of social networks
- model and support developmentally appropriate play experiences and parenting practices
- promote and support participation in the maternal and child health service and kindergarten programs and to link families to other services and supports

Service Model Requirements

The service model must:

- provide supported parent groups and playgroups that include the specified target group
- be developed in collaboration with existing initiatives in the geographic area and take into account existing playgroups and parent groups
- promote ongoing collaboration with existing services and participation in other universal early childhood services
- develop assertive strategies to engage with the target group and maintain regular attendance

The service model should if possible:

- in the case of supported playgroups, employ a qualified worker as defined in Regulation 25 of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 (a list of approved qualifications is provided at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/qualifications)
- in the case of supported parent groups, incorporate the participation of children in developmentally appropriate activities while the parent group is operating
- incorporate the new children's centres as a hub for this initiative, as these facilities are established

The service model may:

- include groups dedicated to specific targets groups (eg young parents or families from a shared cultural background), as well as strategies to include disadvantaged parents in mainstream parent groups and play groups, where this is appropriate
- provide one on one support, with appropriate supervision, for some families participating in the groups
- utilise funding to support a worker to undertake relevant early childhood studies.
- target resources to a geographic area within the identified municipality
- utilise funding support existing playgroups to promote the inclusion of the target group

- continue to provide support for these groups on an ongoing basis and/or assist groups to transition to more independent options

Performance measures

The following table outlines the outcome, measures and outputs that will be monitored as part of this initiative.

Outcome	Measures (proxy)	Outputs
Parent promotion of child health and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgroup and parent group attendance rates • Rate of eligible three year old children participating in a playgroup who are enrolled in four year old kindergarten • Completion of the relevant Key Age and Stage maternal and child health visit(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of groups receiving funds through this initiative • The number of children participating in these groups

The data relating to measures and outputs is required to be collected from all supported parent groups and playgroups that receive any amount of funding through this initiative. A template for data collection forms part of these guidelines.

In collecting this information, sites may also wish to measure other outputs or outcomes, including participant satisfaction or feedback (from agencies) regarding the accessibility of the supported parent groups and playgroups, as part of their own quality improvement process. This information may be included in the annual report discussed below.

Additional support

Playgroup Victoria

Playgroup Victoria has been funded to support the establishment and implementation of this initiative in the identified municipalities. This support will include:

- compiling the annual statewide report on the implementation of the supported parent group and playgroup initiative
- Inviting new staff to participate in existing playgroup leader and agency networks
- Providing resources and induction for new playgroup facilitators on request
- developing resource material for supported parent groups and playgroups as appropriate, including a supplement to the Playgroup Manual
- establishment of an annual statewide forum on playgroups

Post and Antenatal Depression Association (PaNDa)

PaNDa provides confidential information, support and referral to anyone affected by post and antenatal mood disorders, including partners and extended family members. PANDA also produces and distributes accurate information about post and antenatal mood disorders to

health professionals and the wider community.

Over a number of years, PaNDa has supported Maternal and Child Health and other services to establish support groups for families affected by postnatal depression. As part of this initiative, PaNDa will expand their role in the targeted sites where postnatal depression is identified as an issue. Their support will not be limited to groups established as part of this initiative.

Submission specifications

A single submission, in the form of an implementation plan, is invited from each eligible municipality to implement this initiative.

Submissions must be sent to program and service adviser at the Department of Human Services regional office in the relevant region by Friday 31 March 2005. For sites where the initiative does not commence until July 2006, submissions will be required by Friday 19 May 2006.

A list of Department of Human Services program and service advisers is provided on page 15.

Lead agency

Each submission is required to identify the lead agency for the initiative. This agency has responsibility for driving the strategic planning, implementation and project accountability components of the project. The agency must be an incorporated body able to demonstrate financial viability and with which the Department of Human Services can sign a service agreement.

Implementation plan

The implementation plan enables a clear projection of how the agency will meet the goals, objectives and outcomes of the Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative and provides a context for accountability.

It is important that the plan identifies the partners to the initiative and their respective roles and funding allocations. The plan should outline how the proposal meets the specific service model requirements of this initiative, as outlined in these guidelines, including the data collection requirements.

The implementation plan should incorporate the proposed service model(s) and indicate the different components of the model with the budget allocated accordingly.

The plan should also identify the partnerships that have or will be formed to implement this initiative.

Over time, the plan will assist in identifying whether the approaches and strategies are operationally effective or whether they require modification. Modifications to strategies in response to information emerging from the monitoring process are an important part of the quality feedback loop. Any modifications to the plan must be considered and agreed by the partnership as a whole and negotiated with the Department of Human Services program service adviser at least annually.

A template for the implementation plan can be found on page 17.

Reporting and accountability

The lead agency is required to report to the regional office of the Department of Human Services on progress of the implementation plan each year by the 30 January and 15 July.

The outcome of this initiative will be monitored through the reporting of the measures (proxy) and outputs. These should be provided in the attached template (page 21) to the regional office of the Department of Human Services on the 30 January and 15 July each year.

All of the above reports will be collated by Playgroup Victoria to enable a statewide evaluation of the initiative. A statewide summary will be made available to all sites at least annually.

Funding

The funding for this initiative has been allocated under the Best Start activity as described in the Office for Children *Policy and funding plan annual update 2005*.

The allocation is based on a minimum allocation to all municipalities of \$25,000 and a proportional allocation based on the number of children aged 0–4 years living in the municipality.

The breakdown over four years is available from the regional office program and service adviser.

Service agreements

The lead agency within the municipality will be expected to sign a service agreement with the Department of Human Services for this initiative.

For detailed information about service agreements, refer to the *Service agreement information kit for agencies 2003–2006*, which is available from Department of Human Services, Office for Children website or the Funded Agency Channel (FAC) at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/fac

To obtain a copy of the service agreement pro forma, contact your Department of Human Services regional office or download one from the FAC at www.chs.vic.gov.au/fac

About the Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services is part of the State Government of Victoria and is responsible for providing a wide range of health and community services to Victorians.

The Department of Human Services has a central office in Melbourne and eight regions throughout the state. Each region has at least one departmental office; some have more than one office, depending on the size of the region. There are three metropolitan regions and five rural regions.

Each region has a section responsible for early years services with a team of program and service advisers who are appointed to monitor, advise and support services funded through the department to provide services to children and their families. Agencies are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their regional program and service adviser.

Regional office staff work directly with funded agencies. All agency enquiries should be directed to the regional office applicable to the location from which the program is provided.

The following weblink provides access to the Department of Human Services web page.
<http://hnp.dhs.vic.gov.au>

Department of Human Services regional offices contact details are listed below:

Barwon-South Western Region

Program and Service Adviser
Vikki Henderson
State Government Offices
2nd Floor, Cnr Little Malop & Fenwick Streets
Geelong 3220
Phone: (03) 5226 4540
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/barwon

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Program and Service Adviser
Ana Tsaganous
883 Whitehorse Road
Box Hill 3128
Phone: (03) 9843 6000
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/eastern

Gippsland Region

Program and Service Adviser:
Bronwyn Saffron
64 Church Street
Traralgon 3844
Phone: (03) 5177 2500
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/gipps

Grampians Region

Program and Service Adviser:
Sharelle Knight
State Government Offices
Cnr Mair & Doveton Streets
Ballarat 3350
Phone: (03) 5333 6669
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/grampians

Loddon Mallee Region

Manager, Early Years
Chereil Rust
74-78 Queen St
Bendigo 3550
Phone: (03) 5434 5555
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/loddon

Southern Region

Program and Service Adviser
Di Mossenton Brown
122 Thomas Street
Dandenong 3175
Phone: (03) 9213 2111
Website:
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/southern

Hume Region

Program and Service Adviser
Jill Guerra
State Offices
163 Welsford Street
Shepparton 3630
Phone: (03) 5832 1590
Website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/regional/hume

North and West Metropolitan Region

Program and Service Adviser:
Anne Thompson

- 145 Smith Street
Fitzroy 3065
Phone: (03) 9412 5333
- 71 Moreland Street
(Cnr Napier Street)
Footscray 3011
Phone: (03) 9275 7000

Useful resources

To support the development of this initiative, a number of key documents have been drawn on, including:

Centre for Community Child Health, *Early Intervention Parenting Project, Improving access to playgroups for all families, final report 2003*

Playgroups Victoria, *Playgroup manual, 2002* (copies are available from Playgroups Victoria)

Scott, D, Brady, S & Glynn, P, 'New mother groups as a social network intervention: consumer and maternal and child health perspectives', *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 2001, Volume 18, Number 4.

Web links

Department of Premier and Cabinet

www.dpc.vic.gov.au

A Fairer Victoria (April 2005)

Office for Children

www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au

Office for Children Policy and Funding Plan 2003–2006

Service Agreement information kit for agencies 2003–2006

Playgroups Victoria

www.playgroup.org.au

Playgroup manual, third edition

PANDA

Post and Antenatal Depression Association

www.panda.org.au

Supported Parents Groups and Playgroups Implementation Plan Template

Implementation plan

The implementation plan enables a clear projection of how the agency will meet the goals, objectives and outcomes of the Supported Parent Groups and Playgroups initiative and provides a context for accountability.

It is important that the plan identifies the partners to the initiative and their respective roles and funding allocations. The plan should outline how the proposal meets the specific requirements of this initiative, as outlined in these guidelines, including the data collection requirements.

The implementation plan should incorporate the proposed service model(s) and indicate the different components of the model with the budget allocated accordingly.

The plan should also identify the partnerships that have or will be formed to implement this initiative.

Over time, the plan will assist in identifying whether the approaches and strategies are operationally effective or whether they require modification. Modifications to strategies in response to information emerging from the monitoring process are an important part of the quality feedback loop. Any modifications to the plan must be considered and agreed by the partnership as a whole and negotiated with the Department of Human Services program service adviser at least annually.

Performance measures

The following table outlines the outcome, measures and outputs that will be monitored as part of this initiative. Outcome measures determined by the agency or partnership can be included.

Outcome	Measures (proxy)	Outputs
Parent promotion of child health and development	Playgroup and parent group attendance rates Rate of eligible three year old children participating in a playgroup who are enrolled in four year old kindergarten Completion of the relevant Key Age and Stage maternal and child health visit(s)	The number of groups receiving funds through this initiative The number of children participating in these groups

Implementation Plan Details

1. Lead Agency Details:

1. Agency name

2. Name of contact person for the project

3. Agency address and other contact details

2. List the names of partnership that the service model is developed with:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

3. Provide a brief description of the service model (evidence to support the model can be included) and any other outcomes and measures identified by the agency or partnership.

4. Identify the proposed number of groups, sessions per group, families and children to be supported in a full year:

Number of playgroups provided annually	Number of sessions per playgroup (If ongoing the number of sessions over 12 months)	Number of families supported per playgroup	Number of children supported per playgroup
Number of parent groups	Number of sessions per parent group (If ongoing the number of sessions over 12 months)	Number of families supported per parent group	Number of children supported per parent group
Number of combined groups	Number of sessions per combined group (If ongoing the number of sessions over 12 months)	Number of families per combined group	Number of children per combined group

Access to supported parent groups and playgroups should engage disadvantaged and isolated families who may otherwise not access these services. Four population groups known to require particular attention are:

- *Indigenous children and families*
- *Recent/high need immigrant (including refugee) children and families*
- *Families affected by disability*
- *Families affected by chronic disadvantage and with complex needs*

5. Briefly describe (three) strategies to:

- a. Engage isolated and disadvantaged families and in particular the four population groups requiring particular attention
- b. Maintain the attendance of participants in the groups

A requirement for the initiative is to: promote improved outcomes for children, increase parent confidence and capacity, support the establishment of social networks and model and support developmentally appropriate play experiences and parenting practices.

6. Briefly describe (three) strategies to:

1. Provide developmental play experiences for children
2. Increase parent confidence, capacity and connectedness to the community

Lead Agency Endorsement

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Supported Parents Groups and Playgroups Annual Reporting Template

Reporting and accountability

The lead agency is required to report to the regional office of the Department of Human Services on progress of the implementation plan twice each year.

The outcome of this initiative will be monitored through the reporting of the measures (proxy) and outputs. These should be provided in the template to the regional office of the Department of Human Services on the 30 January and 15 July each year.

All of the above reports will be collated by Playgroup Victoria to enable a statewide evaluation of the initiative. A statewide summary will be made available to all sites at least annually.

1. Agency Details

2. Provide a brief comment on the model identified in the implementation plan including the strategies and actions that worked and did not work to:

- a. Engage isolated and disadvantaged families and in particular the four population groups requiring particular attention
 - *Indigenous children and families*
 - *Recent/high need immigrant (including refugee) children and families*
 - *Families affected by disability*
 - *Families affected by chronic disadvantage and with complex needs*
- b. Maintain the attendance of participants in the groups
- c. Improve outcomes for children, including developmental play experiences
- d. Increase parent confidence, capacity and connectedness to the community

Performance measures

The following table outlines the outcome (proxy) measures and outputs that will be monitored as part of this initiative. Outcome measures determined by the agency or partnership can be included.

3. Outcome and output measures

Measure	Date from: _____ to _____			
Number of Playgroups				
Number of children attending playgroups	Under 12 months	12-18 months	2 years	3.5 years
Number of families participating in playgroups				
Number of parent groups				
Number of parents participating in parent groups				
Number of children attending playgroups completing the relevant Key Age and Stage maternal and child health visit(s)	Under 12 months	12-18 months	2 years	3.5 years
Number of eligible three year old children participating in a playgroup who are supported to enrol in four year old kindergarten				
Number of individual families receiving one on one support as part of this initiative				