



GREATER SHEPPARTON PLAYGROUP NEWS

*We are family
We are friends
WE ARE PLAYGROUP!*

Edition 3 - May 2007

Welcome to edition 3 of the Greater Shepparton Playgroup News. May will hopefully be a busy month for playgroups as we launch 'Bring a Friend to Playgroup' month. All playgroups should have received some information a few weeks ago about the initiative. Read more about the event below. Exciting news for rural playgroups. They now have access to the Mobile Playgroup Resource Trailer which is full of fantastic play resources for children. Tatura is now also home to two new playgroups. Read more about the trailer and new playgroups under 'Good News Stories'. I have included some literacy brochures for leaders to hand out to playgroup families. Playgroup Victoria also has a number of free brochures and posters about playgroups you can order via their website. Finally we have an autumn play activity for you to try at playgroup and information about the upcoming Playgroup Victoria conference. Happy Reading!!

MAY IS 'BRING A FRIEND TO PLAYGROUP' MONTH

We all know the many benefits of Playgroup but there are still a large number of families not taking advantage of the fantastic activities playgroup offers and the social benefits for both children and adults.

In order to promote the many playgroups operating across Greater Shepparton and to encourage more families to attend, The Greater Shepparton Playgroup Network has decided to make the month of May 'Bring a Friend to Playgroup' month. While some playgroups have a solid membership base, others find it difficult to engage new families or have lost several families over the New Year break due to children starting kinder or school.

Membership can grow quickly when existing families bring along a friend, so if you believe your playgroup would benefit from a membership boost then I encourage you to advertise the 'Bring a Friend to Playgroup' month with your playgroup families. Your playgroup should have received a letter explaining the initiative, an A4 poster and data collection form prior to the Easter break.

Any existing family who brings along a new family to a playgroup session during the month of May will be rewarded with a 'buy one get one free' child swim pass from Aquamoves Shepparton (one pass per family). The vouchers will be provided to the playgroup leader at the start of June to hand out to participating families, once the data collection form has been completed and returned.

If you have any questions about 'Bring a Friend to Playgroup Month' please feel free to contact Belinda Whitelaw on 58 329 790.

GREATER SHEPPARTON TRANSITION TO SCHOOL EXPO

Over 100 people attended the Greater Shepparton Transition to School Expo at the Eastbank Centre on Monday 30th April. Nineteen primary schools from across Greater Shepparton participated in the event (every school was invited to attend) and set up displays and information tables to showcase their school to prospective parents. Two 'school readiness' information sessions were also held, providing parents with an overview about the transition to school experience, some ideas of how to help your child (and the whole family) with the move to primary school and what to do if you think your child may not be ready for school next year. This is the first major transition event we have held, replacing the smaller, community based information sessions in previous years. Later in the year 'Ready for Kinder' information sessions will be held.

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Mobile Playgroup Resource Trailer - On Friday 23 March the Mobile Playgroup Resource Trailer was launched at Congupna Primary School. This trailer has been funded through the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, ANZ Bank, Best Start and Greater Shepparton City Council and includes some fantastic play resources and toys that playgroups generally cannot afford. This trailer will be available for rural playgroups to hire out on a regular basis for a small annual fee. Congupna Primary School will coordinate all bookings for the trailer from the start of term two. Contact 5829 9286.

Tatura Playgroups - Tatura Community House is facilitating 2 new playgroups from 'The Cubby' centre in Kerford Street, Tatura. A twins playgroup operates the 1st Friday of every month from 9am to 11am while a general playgroup operates every Tuesday morning from 9.30am to 11am. For more information contact the Tatura Community House on 5824 1315.



READING TIPS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE

The Community Literacy workgroup last year produced a brochure on tips for reading with children under school age. Learning to read and write starts long before children commence school.

All the research tells us that it is important to starting reading to children from an early age. Some parents are not aware of the day to day activities they can do to support their child's language development. Simple things like putting out the washing, going for a drive or walk to the park all invite opportunities to talk with children about their surrounds.

Enclosed are a number of copies of the brochure for you to hand out to parents attending your playgroup. If you would like additional copies please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to send some more in the mail (contact details at the bottom of the newsletter).

WHAT IS PLAY?

Play is...

Play is vital for children's development and is usually great fun. Children learn through play. They are motivated to learn by their own desire to make sense of the world. Language and relationships are developed through play. Play gives children the chance to learn new skills and practice them often, building upon what they have already learnt.

Play is choice...

Encourage children to choose what they want to do. Let them play independently, make choices, challenge themselves and be creative. At playgroup the role of the adult is to provide a range of play experiences, then support the child's choice by being nearby, offering practical and verbal help if needed.

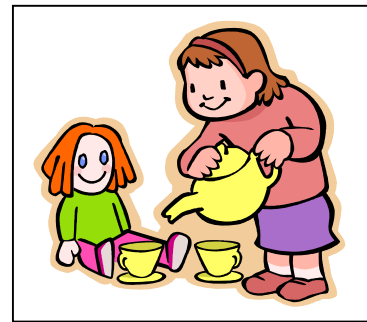
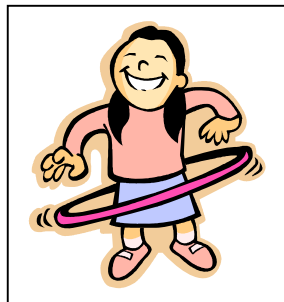
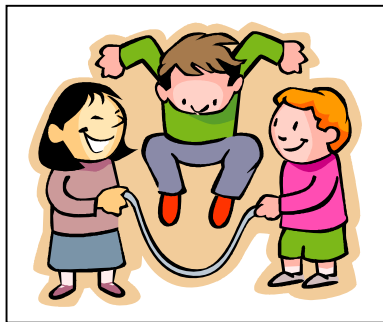
Play is a process...

Young children are at the stage of development where they learn by doing. It is the 'doing' that matters to a child and contributes to his or her learning. It is not the product to take home that is important. For example playing in the sandpit may involve many valuable learning experiences, i.e. feeling, mixing, sifting, digging and pouring but nothing permanent is made.

Play is for fun...

When play is spontaneous and done for its own sake it is satisfying and good fun.

(Playgroup Victoria Playgroup Manual)



PLAYGROUP VICTORIA RESOURCES / PRODUCTS

Playgroup Victoria offers a range of free brochures and posters to promote playgroup such as:

- Do you have a child under 5? (brochure)
- Baby play and baby playgroups (brochure)
- Babies love playgroup too (brochure)
- You can start a playgroup (brochure - in a number of community languages)
- What is playgroup? (poster - for families, mothers, fathers and children)
- Playgroup Victoria postcards and bookmarks

To order any of these resources please go to www.playgroup.org.au and click on 'products'.

CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

Supported Playgroup Conference 2007 - Making Connections

Friday 22nd June

9am to 4pm

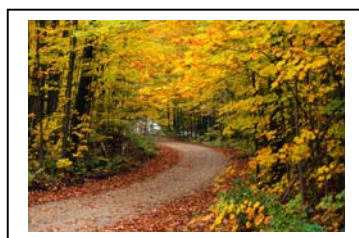
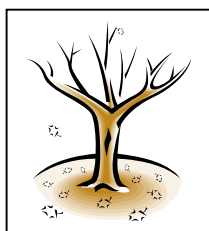
Hemisphere Conference Centre, 488 South Road, Moorabbin

Keynote Speakers:

Professor Margaret Brown, Associate Professor, Deputy Head of Department and Head of Unit, speaking on Making Vital Connections.

Mick Naughton, Manager Family Services and Strategic Planning, Child Protection and Family Services, Office for Children, speaking on how the new Working with Children legislation affects supported playgroups

For more information and registration details go to www.playgroup.org.au



PLAY ACTIVITIES - AUTUMN LEAVES

Autumn leaves come in lots of patterns, textures and changing colours and are an irresistible thing to explore at playgroup. Sing a song about autumn leaves e.g. Leaves are falling Down (to the tune of Rain is Falling Down), or make up something to a tune you like and use finger actions.

Gather up a bucket full of autumn leaves of different sizes, textures and colours to make a group autumn scene. Get some butchers paper, draw some tree trunks and get the children and parents to paste the leaves on the trees and on the ground. Talk about what autumn means to the children and parents e.g. trees losing leaves, colder weather, etc. Once dry you can display it at your playgroup on the wall. Why not do a scene for every season?

KEEPING YOUR DETAILS CURRENT

The Family & Children's Services department at Council keeps an up to date list of playgroups operating in Greater Shepparton. To ensure we are providing the correct information to interested parents when they contact our office, please make sure any changes to contact details or playgroup times/days are forwarded to Belinda.

NEWSLETTER CONTACT DETAILS

Belinda Whitelaw: Greater Shepparton Best Start Project Officer, Greater Shepparton City Council

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