



GREATER SHEPPARTON PLAYGROUP NEWS

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

Edition 1 - October 2006

Welcome to the first edition of 'Greater Shepparton Playgroup News'. Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to supporting all playgroups operating in the municipality and this is one way we can keep you up to date with all the happenings around the city.

Playgroups play such an important role in the lives of parents, carers and children. We are all aware of the many benefits playgroup offers families, including the social connections, the opportunity for children to develop skills and experience new play activities and just taking a break from normal routine, which quite frankly, we all need a break from time to time!

This newsletter will be produced on a quarterly basis. To make it a worthwhile and valuable communication tool we would like to hear from lots of playgroups out there on what you would like to see included in the newsletter, good news stories and any changes to playgroup details.

Happy Reading!

PLAYGROUP RESOURCE KITS

Exciting news!!

Playgroup starter kits for new playgroups and music kits for existing playgroups have recently arrived at Greater Shepparton City Council and are ready to be delivered to you! The kits have been supplied by Playgroup Victoria and form part of the statewide Supported Playgroup and Parent Group initiative.

The playgroup starter kits include toy dinosaurs, insects, cars, farm animals, sand/water play equipment and four A-Z playsheets. The music kits include musical instruments for all ages and a musical instrument A-Z playsheet. I have looked through both kits and I am sure the children will certainly enjoy these new toys.

More A-Z playsheets can be viewed and downloaded behind the Member's Gateway at www.playgroup.org.au. The A-Z playsheets provide playgroup activities for children of all ages and stages. Playgroup starter kits and music kits offer open ended play activities as babies, toddlers and preschool children learn through play.

I will be contacting all playgroups soon to organise delivery or pick up of the kits. In the meantime a big thank you to Playgroup Victoria for providing such wonderful kits and helping playgroups enrich their resource library.



PLAYGROUP TRAINING

Greater Shepparton City Council in partnership with Playgroup Victoria is offering training for playgroup leaders, potential leaders and interested parents. The training includes 4 modules and will be conducted by a Playgroup Victoria staff member.

1. Running an Effective Playgroup - Tuesday 10th October, 10.30am to 12 noon
2. Play at Playgroup - Tuesday 10th October, 1pm to 3pm
3. Guiding Children's Behaviour at Playgroup - Wednesday 11th October, 10am to 12 noon
4. Health and Safety Issues - Wednesday 11th October, 1pm to 3pm

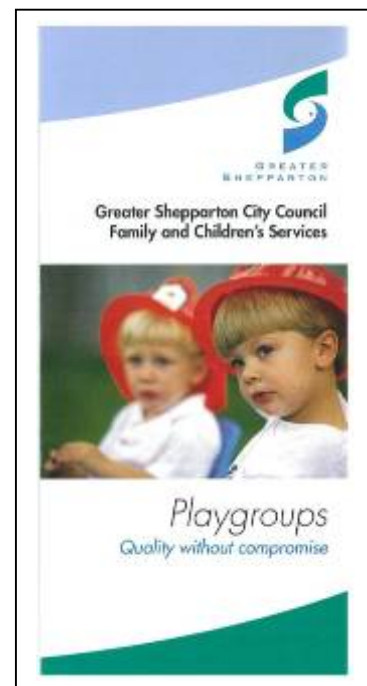
This training is free but places are limited so please contact Belinda Whitelaw on 58 329 790 or email belinda.whitelaw@shepparton.vic.gov.au to register.

Venue for all modules is the Greater Shepparton City Council, 90 Welsford Street, Shepparton. Lunch is included for those completing a full day (2 modules).

PLAYGROUP BROCHURE

Greater Shepparton City Council is pleased to launch their new playgroup brochure 'Playgroups - Quality without Compromise'. The brochure is generic in information and highlights the benefits of playgroup for parents, carers and children.

It has been distributed to all Maternal and Child centres, childcare centres and kindergartens and is also available from Council. A copy of the brochure has been included with this newsletter. We hope the brochure encourages more families to attend playgroups in the municipality.



CHILDREN'S WEEK

Children's Week will be celebrated from the 23rd - 29th October 2006. The Greater Shepparton Children's Week Committee has again organised a number of fun events and activities for families. Three 'Picnic in the Park' events will be held in Tatura (24th), Shepparton (25th) and Mooroopna (26th) from 10am to 12 noon and a Pram Walk will be held in Shepparton (25th), weather permitting.

A flyer advertising the Children's Week events and venues has been included for you to display at your playgroup. Please encourage your playgroup families to come along and enjoy the activities on offer. If it is a day your playgroup usually meets, why not make it a special outing for that week? There is no cost to attend. The kids will love the obstacle course, face painting, playdough and storytelling corner. Don't forget to bring along a snack and drink and the sunscreen if the sun is shining. We hope to see you there.

PLAYGROUP VICTORIA - SUPPORTING PLAYGROUPS

Playgroup Victoria is a not for profit organization funded by membership, fundraising and state and federal government grants. Playgroup Victoria provides support for playgroups in a number of ways including:

- Playgroup training
- Insurance
- Resources (playsheets, manuals)
- Videos
- Playgroup magazine
- ePlaygroup News

There are a number of different memberships available for playgroups and organizations including family membership, playgroup membership and professional membership. Each has varying degrees of insurance coverage and benefits. All members of Playgroup Victoria have access to the Members Gateway on the website www.playgroup.org.au which includes lots of great stuff, in particular the play sheets and play ideas for playgroup sessions.

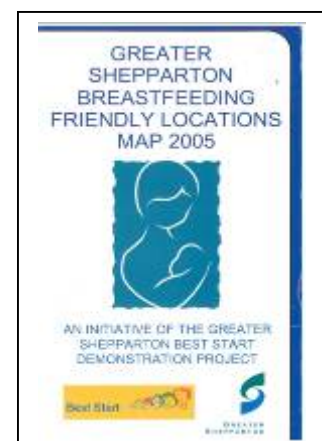
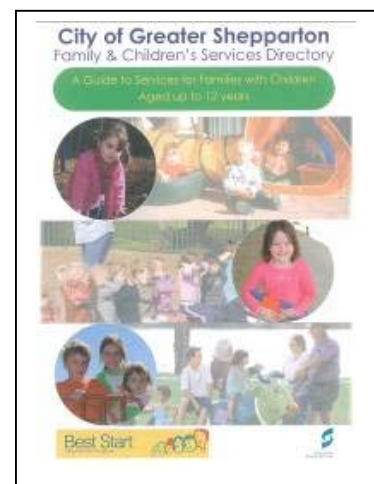
Non members can also access the website and check out the community noticeboard, what's on, dates and venues for playgroup training and locate a playgroup in the local area. I strongly encourage all of you to log onto the website if you have not done so before or contact Playgroup Victoria on toll free 1800 811 156 to find out more about membership options if your playgroup is interested.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES - BREASTFEEDING MAP AND FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORY

Greater Shepparton City Council has two valuable resources playgroup families may be interested in - the Greater Shepparton Breastfeeding Map and Greater Shepparton Family & Children's Services Community Directory booklet. Both resources are an initiative of the Best Start project and are currently being updated.

The Breastfeeding Map lists nearly 100 businesses, shops and community facilities displaying the ABA 'Breastfeeding Friendly' sticker. The directory lists services for families with children aged 0 to 12 years in the municipality.

Copies of both resources have been distributed to early childhood and family support services and are available from Council. If your playgroup would like copies of either resource please contact Julie Muir, Family & Children's Services Resource Officer at Council on 58 329 807. Both the updated map and directory should be available by the end of November.



GUEST SPEAKERS & VISITORS

Is your playgroup interested in having a guest speaker come along for a special session? If so there are a few options you may like to consider. Cathy Artridge is the Children's and Young Adults Librarian and is more than happy to visit playgroups for special toddler storytime sessions. Cathy also encourages playgroups to come along to the Toddler Storytime sessions at the Shepparton, Mooroopna and Tatura libraries. You can contact Cathy on 5832 1600.

Does your playgroup have children starting kinder or primary school next year? Would you like someone to come along and talk to interested parents about the transition experience and how to assist children during this important time? If so then contact the Family & Children's Services department of 5832 9790. Another good resource is the Parent Education Service at GV Community Health Service. You can contact Meredith and Joy on 5823 3200.

We are also in the process of working with the MCH service to get nurses outreaching to playgroups and will let you know the outcome.

GREATER SHEPPARTON PLAYGROUP NETWORK

This Network was established as part of the Greater Shepparton Best Start project as a way of sharing information and learnings amongst playgroup leaders. It is also a great forum for leaders to discuss common playgroup issues and provide support to one another.

As of 2006, all playgroups operating in Greater Shepparton are a member of this network and welcome to attend the quarterly meetings. A meeting was held in August and it was great to see a number of new faces attending. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th December from 12.30pm to 2pm in the Goulburn Room at Council. Lunch will be included. A flyer will be sent out closer to the date to remind people of the meeting. We hope to see you there.



KEEPING YOUR DETAILS CURRENT

The Family & Children's Services department at Council keeps an up to date list of playgroups operating in Greater Shepparton. A copy of the list has been included with this newsletter. To ensure we are providing the correct information to interested parents when they contact our office, can you please review the contact details for your playgroup to ensure we have the correct information listed. If any details are incorrect please contact our office so we can make the required changes.

GOOD NEWS STORIES

I know there must be heaps of good news stories out there so why not send them in to be included in the newsletter? Has your playgroup recently started? Have you just celebrated a significant milestone? Has your membership increased thanks to some creative advertising or promotion? Have you been successful with a grant? Whatever it may be we want to hear from you. My contact details are included below so get cracking! Looking forward to hearing from you soon!

NEWSLETTER CONTACT DETAILS

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