

MEDIA RELEASE

21 October 2022

New statement launches a national conversation on the value of playgroups

The role of playgroups in supporting children's development and building strong families and communities is being highlighted for the first time in a national Playgroup Statement.

Succinct and evidence-based, the Playgroup Statement explains the value of playgroups for children, families and communities, and issues a call to action for greater resourcing and more research.

'Playgroups are undervalued as an element of Australia's social infrastructure', said Playgroup Australia CEO Dr Amanda Walsh. 'Most people have an idea of what playgroups are, but we often fail to see their scale and impact.'

'There are thousands of playgroups operating in every state and territory of Australia, including groups designed to support children with additional needs and their families,' Dr Walsh said.

'Every playgroup is unique, but they all provide incredibly important services: play-based learning and social-emotional development for children; social support for parents and carers; and connections that build communities.'

Playgroup organisations worked closely with researchers at Australian Catholic University (ACU), and with other early childhood and family support organisations, to develop the Statement.

'I particularly want to thank the Co-Chairs of this project, Professor Susan Edwards and Associate Professor Karen McLean from ACU, and the National Advisory Core Group, led by Danny Schwarz (Playgroup Victoria CEO) and David Zarb (Playgroup WA CEO).

'We want the Playgroup Statement to kickstart a national conversation on how we ensure that all children and families, wherever they are and whatever their circumstances, can benefit from playgroup.'

ACU Associate Professor Karen McLean said the Playgroup Statement represented the views of key stakeholders and outlined the benefits of playgroups, as well as the importance of improved accessibility and further research.

'We are thrilled the undisputed importance of playgroups as a fun and effective way for children and their families to enhance their social skills, educational and economic opportunities, support networks and physical and mental health is being acknowledged,' she said.

Download the Playgroup Statement [here](#).

See overleaf for the organisations that contributed to the Playgroup Statement.

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The Playgroup Statement was developed with expert input from the following:

Australian Catholic University (Professor Susan Edwards and Associate Professor Karen McLean)

National Advisory Core Group

Playgroup Australia

Playgroup Victoria

Playgroup WA

National Advisory Group

ARACY

Brotherhood of St Laurence

Centre for Child & Family Studies, Queensland

University of Technology

Children and Young People with Disability

Australia

Citron Early Childhood Consultancy

Department of Education (NSW)

Early Childhood Australia

Families Australia

Maternal Child and Family Health Nurses

Australia Inc.

Dr Sue Packer AM

Public Advocate and Children and Young

People Commissioner (ACT)

Raising Children Network, Parenting Research
Centre

Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

Save the Children Australia

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children

Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

Telethon Kids Institute

Playgroup Organisations

ACT Playgroups

Play Matters Australia

Playgroup NSW

Playgroup NT

Playgroup SA

Playgroup Tasmania

Playgroup Victoria

Playgroup WA