

## What is a Playgroup?

Playgroup is for babies and young children and their mums, dads, grandparents and other carers. It is unique in that adults attend with their children. Playgroups meet regularly at community venues in every corner of Australia. Playgroups are as different as the people in them, and many are formed from a desire to meet families who have had similar experiences.

Community, parent-run playgroups have been running in Australia for over 40 years. There are over 8,300 community playgroups in Australia. Children with ASD also attend many community playgroups.



**Playgroup Australia has been funded to June 2012 by the Australian Government to roll-out 150 playgroups for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.**

*“Playing is how young children learn. Playing with each other and caring adults is the best, fastest and most lasting way to grow kind, smart and loving human beings. Nothing provides this as well as playgroups”*

**Steve Biddulph**, Family Psychologist, Father of the Year, and Author of *Raising Boys*



### Contact us

For information on playgroups and other early intervention services, contact your State or Territory Playgroup Association:

**1800 171 882 (toll free)**  
**[www.playgroupaustralia.com.au](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au)**  
**[info@playgroupaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@playgroupaustralia.com.au)**



Playgroup Australia is the national body recognised as the leading representative and advocate for playgroups

# Playgroups for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs as part of the *Helping Children with Autism Package*.

toll free **1800 171 882**

# Supporting families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

*PlayConnect Playgroups are here to help families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). It's about connecting with other families.*

## Who can go to a PlayConnect Playgroup?

Families that have a child aged from 0-6 years with ASD, or ASD like symptoms, are welcome to join a PlayConnect Playgroup. Your child does not need an ASD diagnosis to join.

## What will happen at a PlayConnect Playgroup?

PlayConnect Playgroups meet weekly for two hours. During playgroup sessions, caregivers and children participate in a variety of play activities suited to the needs of children with ASD.

Sessions are initially run by a Development Worker, for between 6-24 months, until they become community, parent-run playgroups. Families will also receive information about other services for children with ASD.

## How will PlayConnect Playgroups benefit our family?

Numerous studies have shown the value of playgroup on young children's social, cognitive, emotional and language development. Parents and caregivers say playgroups are useful because they help them connect with other families in similar situations.

## Can my other children who do not have ASD or ASD like symptoms attend?

Yes, siblings aged 0-6 years are also welcome to attend.

## Will I be able to speak with ASD specialists?

PlayConnect is not therapy based however your PlayConnect Worker can provide you with information about strategies for play and specialist services in your area. You can also contact Playgroup Australia's ASD Advisor for advice about children with ASD at playgroup on 1800 790 335.

## Is there a cost to families?

Australian Government funding will help families to access PlayConnect during the first two years of operation. Some PlayConnect Playgroups may decide to undertake certain activities that are not covered by the funding so families may be asked to make a contribution.

## Where will the playgroups be located?

PlayConnect Playgroups will be located in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

## How can I find out more?

Visit the website [www.playconnect.com.au](http://www.playconnect.com.au) or contact your Playgroup Association on **1800 171 882 (toll free)**

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## Helping Children with Autism

For more information about the early intervention available through the Australian Government *Helping Children With Autism* Package, visit the website [www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism) or call the *Helping Children With Autism* Information Line: 1800 289 177.