

Multicultural Supported Playgroups Liverpool LGA

Contact details

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Hours of service: Playgroups operate four days per week for three hours.
Family Support can be accessed five days per week from 9am to 5pm.

**Family Workers/
Group Facilitators:** Maria Angulo
Marta Bevilacqua

Coordinator: Beatriz Mesuraco **Manager:** Cristina Pebaque
Operations Manager: Anthea Jackson **Director:** Vivien Tait

About the program

Multicultural Supported Playgroups were established in June 2004 to meet the diverse cultural family needs in the Liverpool area. Isolation due to migration and language difficulties is common across most of the cultural groups.

The playgroups provide opportunities for parents to meet and share experiences of their different cultures while their babies/children play and develop social skills. Further support is available to families with additional needs through home visiting and advocacy.

Program locations

Monday: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Liverpool Public School, Railway Street, Liverpool NSW 2170

Tuesday: 9.30am – 12.00 noon
Casula Public School, Casula NSW 2170

Wednesday: 9.00am – 11.30am
School Readiness Playgroup
Liverpool Public School, Railway Street, Liverpool NSW 2170

Friday:
Heckenberg Public School, Gindabine Street, Heckenberg NSW 2168

Eligibility

Parents with children 0-5 years old who live in the Liverpool area.

Objectives

Children will learn how to play and socialise, and enjoy music, craft, books, story telling and educational games, as a way to enhance their developmental skills. Parents will be included in the early learning process, have the opportunity to share their views and concerns with other parents, increase their social networks and gain information about the delivery of services.

The playgroups aim to provide a friendly, relaxed environment where children can learn how to play, socialise, enjoy music, craft, educational games and much more.

Parents have the opportunity to interact with their children, make new friends and learn about child development and child behaviour management. Both parents and children can practise and increase their English language skills and learn about other cultures.

The Family Support Workers can provide home visiting to assist with individual needs, e.g. managing child behaviour, further development of parenting skills, communication issues, dealing with problems, conflict, isolation and stress.

Examples of playgroups

Liverpool playgroup has families from China, India, Iraq, Romania, Philippines, South America, Germany, Lebanon, South Africa, Sudan, Serbia and Turkey. They share recipes and cultural experiences.

Heckenberg Playgroup has a number of families who previously attended a less structured playgroup. The parents initially just wanted to talk amongst themselves, showing little interaction with their children. Through the activity structure and with encouragement from staff, the parents began to take an active role in play with their children. They say how much more they enjoy coming to the group, learning about children's needs.

Parents said they are amazed at how their children have adapted to the group routines so easily and interact so well with the other children.

Referral

The primary referrals come from a variety of sources e.g. local schools, support services. Families can also refer themselves.

Services

Like traditional playgroups, supported playgroups provide the opportunity for children to play and develop social skills and for parents to meet other parents and share experiences.

These multicultural playgroups also enable parents and children to learn about other cultures and develop their English language skills. We focus on the development and enhancement of early literacy skills for children and help parents to work with the children, supporting them for their future schooling.

This aspect is of particular importance as many migrant, refugee children cannot speak English when they start school creating enormous disadvantage which often affects their long-term prospects of educational achievement.

Playgroup setting with special focus on early literacy activities for children of different ages, and school readiness activities

Funding

Community Services, Department of Human Services (formerly DoCS) Early Childhood 100%

Service user perspective:

Parents feel happy and committed to being part of the playgroups.

One mother said her family life changed for the better after joining the playgroup.. Another parent said: *“Every Monday, my son wakes up early and reminds me”*.