

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER



Christian Playgroup Network
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WELCOMING NEW FAMILIES

At the start of a new year you will have families coming back to your playgroup from last year, as well as welcoming new families to your playgroup. Arriving at playgroup for the first time can be daunting for any family. Many families will feel uneasy and shy on the first day, and find it hard to introduce themselves.

Here are a few ideas to help make families feel welcome and part of the group

- Warmly welcome new families. Choose a 'welcomer' whose responsibility is specifically to welcome new families for the first few weeks. Greet both the adult and the child as they arrive.
- If you have a 'Welcome to our playgroup' pack this is a great time to give it to them, or they may have received this before starting.
- Show them around the premises including the nappy changing area, toilets, signing in/ out area etc.
- Explain the basic routines and expectations of your playgroup eg parents responsible for supervising children at all times.
- Introduce them to other families initially and throughout the session.
- Ask about their child's interests and guide them to activities they like the most.
- Ask the carer about their family.
- Give each member of the family a name tag to wear every time they come to playgroup. A good idea is to include the names of the children on the parents/ carers name tag too.
- If you would like, take a photo of each family (or ask them to provide a photo from home) to display on an 'Our Playgroup' poster, to help people get to know each other, and remember which children belong to who.
- Offer them a cuppa or cool drink at morning tea time
- During a group time (morning tea or mat time) formally introduce each member of the family. You may like to sing a song of welcome and ask the child to choose their favourite song to sing

At the end of the session

- Make time for a chat and the opportunity to ask any questions
- Farewell them with 'We'll see you next week!'
- Follow up with a phone call to see how they enjoyed their visit
- Welcome them and their child by name next week

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A 'WELCOME TO OUR PLAYGROUP' PACK

This is a great way of communicating information to your new families. You may include in this pack:

- Enrolment form
- Policies eg behaviour, safety, illness & injury, sunsmart
- An explanation of the structure and routines of the playgroup session
- An introduction to the play leader & any helpers that will be part of their group (maybe a laminated & named photo for the child to put on the wall at home)
- An explanation of the Christian ethos and leadership of the playgroup
- Some information about church activities
- Information about parent involvement eg rosters, cleaning toys

To find some templates to personalise to your group for some of the above go to the member's only section of our website www.cpn.org.au

Welcoming doesn't just last for one week. We all in the group need to be looking out for children and adults who feel left out at playgroup. A friendly smile and a chat may make an enormous difference to their playgroup experience.