

take a walk on the
Child Side
Playgroup and School



Playgroup Participation
Reference Booklet

Playgroup  WA



PURPOSE

Our school began as a playgroup whilst awaiting approval to become a registered school, and through our work as parents of young children ourselves and through our professional work as Early Childhood Educators, we recognised the value of a connected community and the benefits of starting the village to care for children before school-age. Playgroup values and promotes the significance of a child's development before school age.

We had connection with the work and research of Dr. Fraser Mustard*, Harvard University's Project Zero and Reggio Children, and we were involved in a number of professional projects investing in Early Years of Childhood through our employment as educators in the public system, prior to founding Child Side. We recognised the value of playgroup helping children and families feel familiar, comfortable and welcome in spaces outside of their homes and within a more formal setting dedicated to investing in children's learning and well-being. We recognised that investing in children requires places and spaces to interact purposefully with a shared purpose to build common ground around how we interact and guide children as their early experiences shape their future selves.

Our Playgroup families are 'invited guests' who share our school space and our active commitment to care for children as they experience the world and each other outside of their familiar home environments. Our playgroup community is visible to our school community and embraced within our culture and commitment to children.

Our playgroup adult community demonstrates active investment in caring for children. Our K-10 school age children recognise the value of active parenting through seeing playgroup sharing our outdoor spaces weekly. We include playgroup in our logo to highlight the value we place on child development and family interaction right from birth. The first 2000 days of life matter and parents are their child's first and most important and long-term educators.

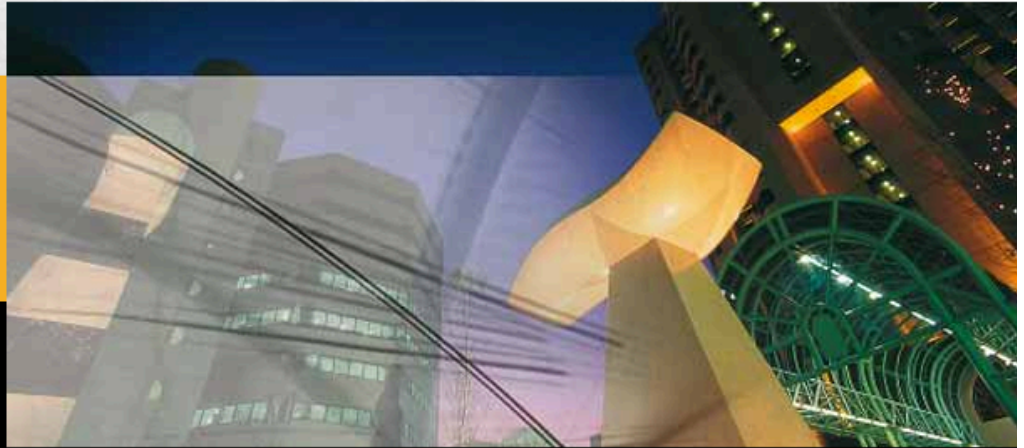
STRUCTURE

We are members of Playgroup WA, and a portion of our Playgroup families enrol as school families, if places are available and is within their family capacity to enrol and regularly attend. The playgroup committee has been formed as a sub committee appointed by Child Side Schools' Governing Council, working within the terms set out in the Terms of Reference.

Our outdoor playgroup runs weekly utilising the beautiful spacious outdoor learning environment in our Early Childhood Cluster ECC yard. We have had an active 'Playgroup Listener' role, aligned with the school philosophy, vision, culture, principles and practices, every year since inception, inspired by the value of relationships championed by the Reggio Emilia approach. Our 'Playgroup Listener' works within the school 's Design and Culture, our Codes of Conduct and our 3-way Participation approach to ensure that the neuroscientific research and recommendations of the *Early Years Investment Strategy is practically communicated through interactions with children and their families at the Playgroup level.

Investing in the Early Years:

Closing the gap between what we know and what we do



Fraser Mustard

Thinker in Residence 2007

*** “Investing in the Early Years: Closing the gap between what we know and what we do. Doctor Fraser Mustard- Council for Early Child Development and Parenting”**



‘We know about how experience in the early years affects brain development and how the development of the brain and biological pathways in this period influences health, learning and behaviour throughout the lifecycle. Understanding what we know about developmental neuroscience in the early years has implications for all initiatives (such as playgroups) to monitor and improve human development.

Children’s Daily Experience and Interactions in the Early Years of life (generally 0-8 years of age):

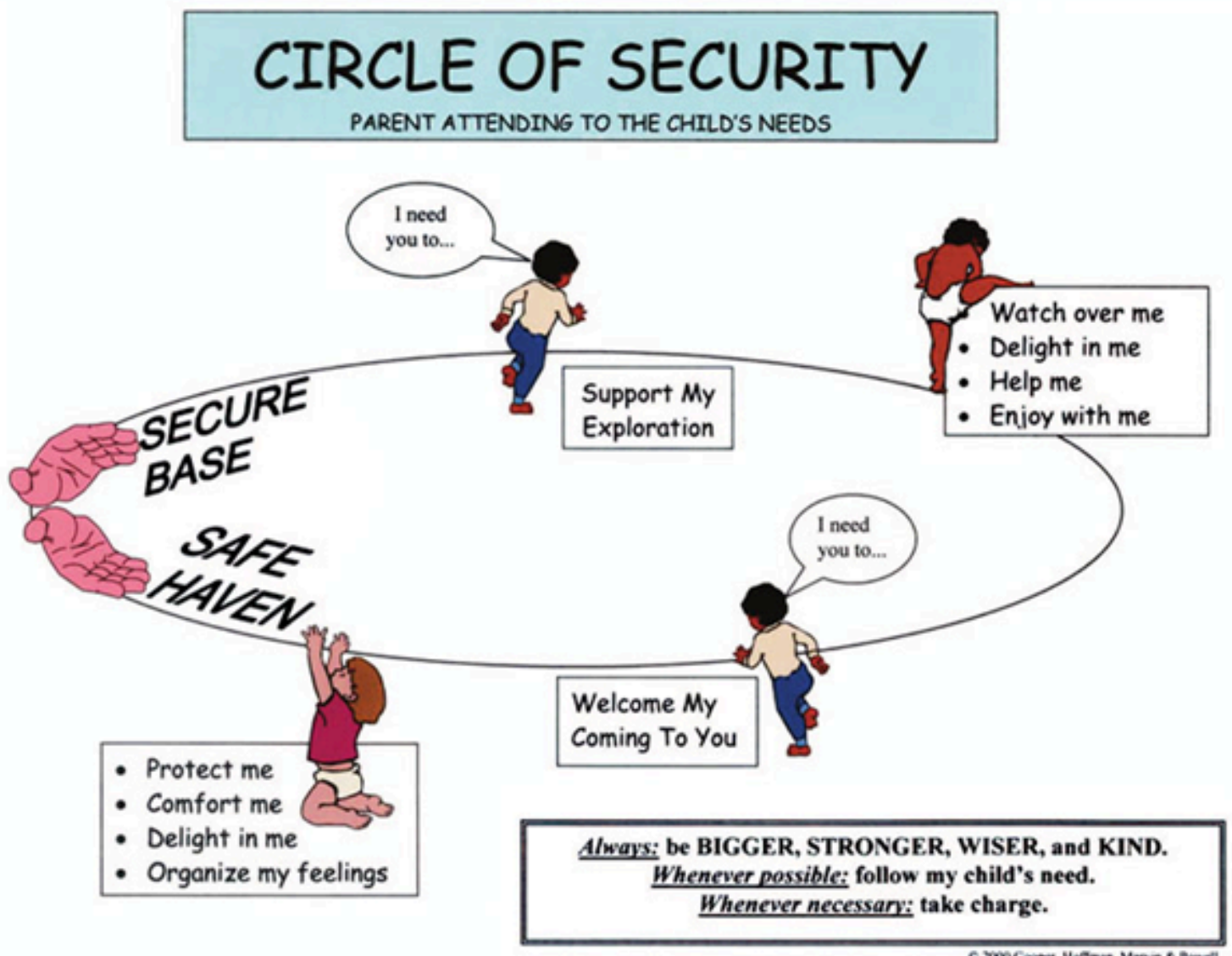
- Affects gene expression and the function of sensing neurons and the development of neural pathways
- Shapes emotional perceptions and regulates temperament and social development
- Shapes language and literacy capability
- Shapes perceptual and cognitive capability
- Shapes how we interpret and cope with our daily experiences
- Shapes physical and mental health resiliency in adult life
- Shapes physical development and co-ordination required to actively participate in self-care, play, family-life, school-life, literacy, sport, recreation, employment...

HOW ADULTS PARTICIPATE AT PLAYGROUP

Circle of Security

Parents, adult care-givers and family members interact at our playgroup with their child through the Circle of Security. We interact with every adult as a learner too as they too grow their relationship with their child as each child develops and changes, whilst continuing to build their parental knowledge and strengthen their relationships with other adults and other people's children. We advocate compassion, tolerance and clear, predictable "beautiful" boundaries, building physical, social and emotional resilience (see Maggie Dent Podcasts and blogs).

Our Playgroup Listener helps adults interact constructively and respectfully with other people's children and to help navigate the interactions between their own child and other people's children. We see all interactions as learning opportunities and can help families re-frame situations that guide children's behaviours and interactions and keep them feeling secure through any inevitable conflict of immediate needs and desires of very young children. **Together we support each other to demonstrate respectful relationships.**



‘Every child comes into the world seeking a secure relationship with her/his caregivers. The Circle of Security helps promote that security. A secure attachment between child and caregiver is critical to a child’s current and future well-being. Research has shown that secure children have increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enter school more ready to learn, and are able to handle their emotions better than their less secure peers. As they grow older, secure children become less likely to live in poverty, have legal problems, or experience chronic emotional difficulties.’



Serve and Return

'Serve and return' is a phrase coined by Harvard researchers to describe back-and-forth interactions between adults and children.

Please read the 'Serve and Return Guide for Parents and Care-Givers' that comes with this Playgroup Participation Booklet and access our Playgroup Listener for further conversations and demonstrations and examples to support you and any family member. We encourage every playgroup adult to view the Thrive by Five TED Talk video below. Please seek out a hard copy of the Guide from our office staff in the MAG room.

Serve and Return Guide for Parents & Care-givers



July 22nd, 2021
TED TALK MOLLY WRIGHT: HOW EVERY CHILD CAN THRIVE BY FIVE.

Additional Resources - Powerful advocates for the value of parenting.



The First 2000 days of life - Dr Elizabeth Murphy - NSW Health



Maggie Dent: Parental as Anything Podcast

Please share with others!

Playgroups are a great way for your child to interact with other children in a socially and sensory stimulating environment, while giving adults the opportunity to interact with other families in a family friendly place.

Families must join Playgroup WA and pay an annual insurance fee directly to Playgroup WA. Please see the Playgroup WA Membership portal for more information.



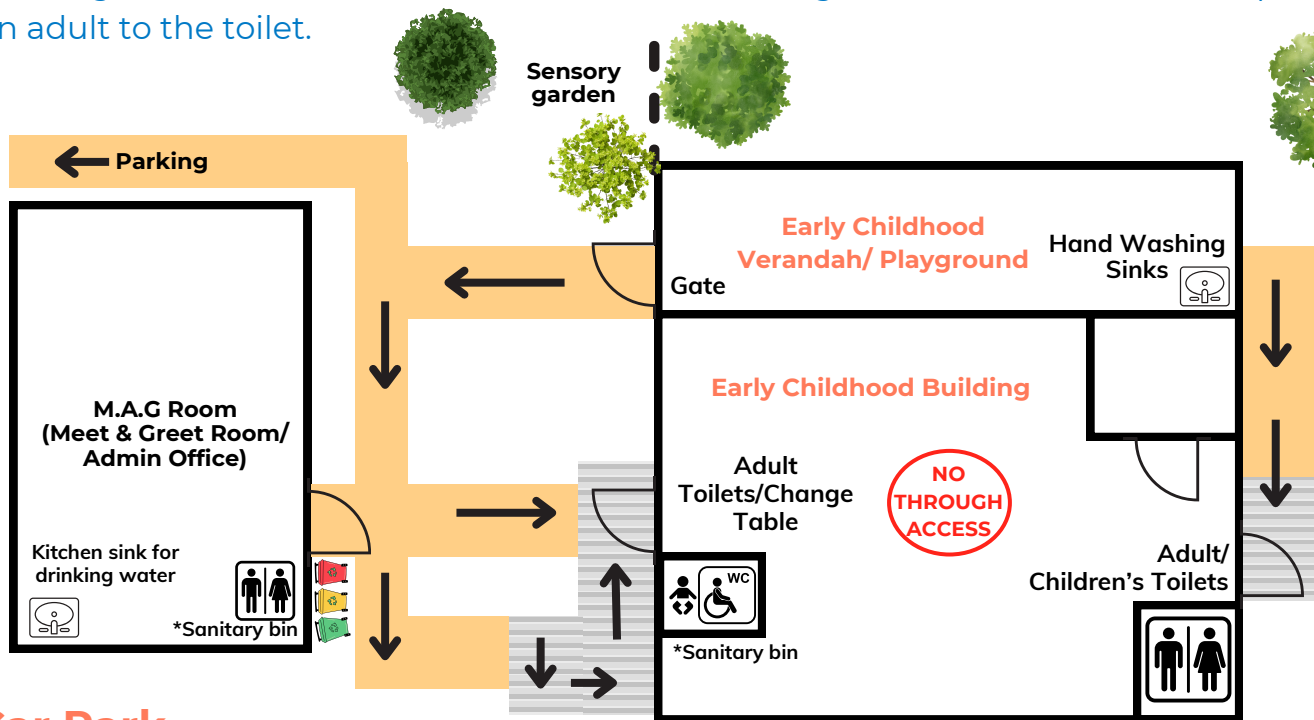
Child Side Playgroup is a member of Playgroup WA



SHARED SPACES

Toilets

Playgroup shares the Early Childhood Cluster ECC toilets. Children's toilets are located on the east side of the building via the stairs and an adult/disabled toilet with access to a change table is located on the west side of the building through the stairs/ramp. Please use these access pathways located on each SIDE of the building rather than walk through the building where the K-3 children and staff are working. Children MUST be accompanied by an adult to the toilet.



Car Park

This is a shared car park with staff and school families. It is a busy and potentially dangerous place; therefore, a direct line of sight is required for all adults to supervise their children when out in the car park. It is very difficult to predict the movements of young children and see prams and little people out of a car window. Accidents happen in seconds and consequences can last or end a lifetime.

Gates

There are 4 access gates in the ECC yard and 2 into the school grounds from the carpark. Please ensure that these are closed behind you every single time and that you close them if you notice they are open. The two rear gates need to be **locked** as they lead out into areas that are not accessible to unsupervised children of any age (the adjoining public open space and lake and the work sheds and storage areas). Please see the Playgroup Listener or seek out a staff member (accessible through our Office Administration in the next-door building if you notice the rear gates are unlocked).

Please close these gates as soon as you notice **before** immediately informing a staff member. Ask another adult to access staff and remain by gate if unable to close/lock.



Outdoor spaces and resources

Our ECC children and staff use the outdoor space and resources after playgroup and appreciate any families who can help restore the outdoor learning ‘rooms’ such as the mine-site, bush kitchen and farm stall. Please dispose of any broken resources and rubbish and inform our Playgroup Listener or our Office Administrator Assistant if and when anything is unsafe, broken or needs replenishing/watering etc... Children learn through watching adults care for country.

We welcome the effort of playgroup adults who help water and weed, restore the paved area, ensure the gates are closed and the toilets are clean. Please note that the outdoor learning space is designed as a series of spaces to promote movement and activity and to stimulate the senses. Thankyou for following your child and pottering nearby or engaging with them and other people’s children with the positive intent to help young children to be safe, to take some exploration and movement risks, to notice others, learning each other’s names and interests.

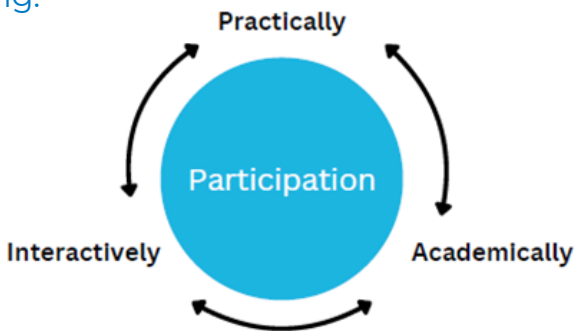
Our playgroup follows the child’s lead and interests rather than providing adult driven tasks. This is part of our design.



Interactions with our school community

YAC Shack

Our Young Adolescent Cluster YAC (Years 7-10) operate a socially and environmentally responsible take-away café as a weekly small business as part of their 3-way participation curriculum into entrepreneurial learning.



Our YAC Shack is available for playgroup families to purchase a takeaway coffee, juice or milkshake. The YAC Shack has online digital payments available too through a Square Contactless Payment Device. This gives the YACs and our playgroup families a purpose for interacting and making connections. Please offer them constructive and helpful feedback so they can build their customer service skills, and a quality product made with care. They use the funds to pay for Barista courses and to purchase quality beans, a variety of milks and service the coffee machines building their employability capacity.

YAC Shack have their own reusable cups which also help protect young children from spills. Thanks for returning the boomerang cup and lid to the designated table.

Food and Songs

Families are invited to bring a piece of fruit to share and which children will help to cut up. Children sit with their family and eat a shared platter of fruit and sing songs to build a shared sense of time, space and place and to notice other people. It is a time to 'pause' busy bodies and to give children a shared purpose to come together. We encourage all adults and children to join in (even if young children 'yo-yo' in and out of this informal session).

Please note our observations are if young children are constantly grazing from their own home-packed lunch-boxes before fruit time then they are less likely to want to join in with the shared platter and join in the songs. Children can graze on their own snacks at this time. We do encourage snacks without extra wrapping and packaging as we are mindful of waste, and please do not bring nuts or other high allergen foods.

Water

Please bring your own water bottle which can be refilled in the MAG room kitchen sink. Please refer to map on page 6.

Bins

Please model for children the correct disposal of nappies by wrapping them and placing in the outdoor Red Lid Bin (located between ECC building and the Administration Office - known as the MAG: Meet And Greet building). Please see a staff member if unsure or if the bin is not there.

Please use the Green Bin for food scraps and the Yellow bin to recycle and paper or cardboard. There is a sanitary bin in the far adult toilet. Please refer to map on page 6.

Lost Property

Please check BEFORE you leave each time for personal items and that nappies are dealt with appropriately. Family commitment to caring for own and shared items is a powerful message for our school aged children.



Mobile Phone Use

We ask that families remain present in play with the children and in conversations with other adults by modelling healthy relationships by having phones away.



Our wall mural reminds us all of our shared spaces with nature, reminding us all to reduce waste and 'use less, lose less' as we Care for Country as a community.

SHAPE OF PLAYGROUP

Arrival

Please make sure personal bags are out of reach of other young curious children, especially if you have medications (even Panadol) in your bag, your car keys and phones etc. Please place bags in the shelves provided.

Sign In

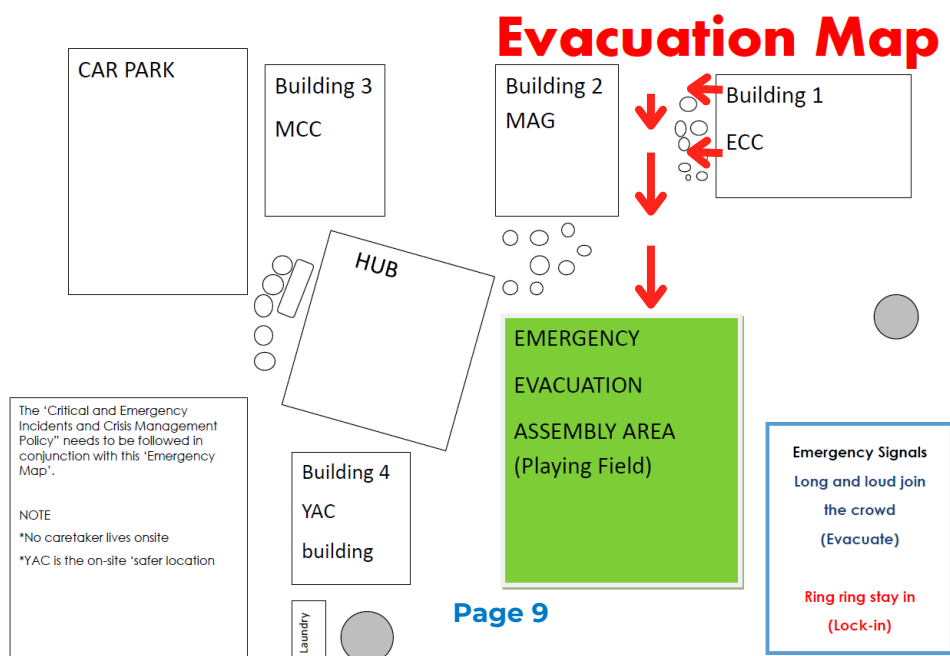
All visitors to playgroup are required to sign in by writing their name, child's name and phone number in the sign in book on the welcome stand in the ECC Playground entrance. If it is your first time visiting, please make sure you have checked in with the playgroup listener and completed an enrolment form. Check you have a designated Emergency Contact number listed in case needed whilst you are at Playgroup.

Emergencies & First Aid

Please make sure that you are familiar with the Emergency Protocols:

- **Long and loud - Join the Crowd:** A Single note sound will play over the loud speaker when all occupants of the school are required to calmly and upon instruction of staff evacuate to the school oval.
- **Ring, Ring- Go in:** Please follow staff to a designated building or the closest building.
- **A staff member using a whistle** – watch and listen to directions.
- **Adult or child calling out danger** – please ensure you have your child/ren close by and listen to directions by staff.

General First Aid supplies are stored in the MAG room, please see the Playgroup listener or Office Administration Assistant for assistance. Please be mindful of the concussion protocols if a child bumps or bangs their heads. The Playgroup Listener or Office Administration will have advice for you.



10 Resilience Building Blocks

for children aged 0 - 12 years

10



Strengthen the spirit

8



Absence of stress

9



Self mastery

5



Build life skills

6



Meaningful involvement
with positive adults

7



Clear boundaries

1



Positive healthy
pregnancy

2



Good nutrition

3



Safe nurturing care within
the circle of family

4



Plenty of play



Playgroup Participation Reference Booklet Version 1 - 2025
Please note that this document is updated as necessary.
Please see the website for the latest edition.