

## Let's go to playgroup!

Playgroup is a great place for your child (and you) to make new friends and share new experiences. It's through play that children learn about the world around them. If you have concerns about your child being a part of playgroup, here are some ideas we hope will help.



### Where to start?

**You may want to visit different playgroups in your area or talk with other families to decide which will be the best suited group for you and your child.**

**Considerations may include:**

- ❖ Access and amenities
- ❖ The size of the group
- ❖ The age range of the children
- ❖ The structure of the playgroup (unstructured/ structured) and the activity options

**Talking with others** about your child's disability can sometimes be difficult - what you choose to share with others is entirely up to you. The information you do choose to share may help others develop good relationships with your child and better understand how they can help your child join in certain activities.

You may choose to share the Shaping outcomes *Inclusion guide, disability factsheets* and/or *inclusion tips* with others in the group.

**Once you have decided on a group, you can prepare your child by:**

- ❖ Reading stories or watching videos about going to playgroup
- ❖ Practicing play skills (eg taking turns and sharing)
- ❖ Using visual supports to prepare your child for what will happen (eg photos of the playgroup)
- ❖ Developing a social story for your child about going to playgroup

By understanding **what will happen** and **what is expected of them**, your child will feel less anxious or confused.

Be prepared with supports for your child's **sensory needs** – you may wish work with your early intervention specialist to develop a sensory profile for you child.

Plan for **challenging situations**:

- ❖ What are the signs your child is becoming upset?
- ❖ What can help prevent the situation from escalating?
- ❖ Is there somewhere quiet you can go to take a break?

Can you start with shorter visits to the playgroup until your child is more comfortable? It is better to have small successes first.

If your child does become distressed, **stay calm** yourself so you can support your child. You may find it helpful to have a family member or friend come along to help.

**While being prepared will give you the best chance to succeed, things don't always go to plan.**

**Reflect on what worked and what didn't to help you plan for your next outing.**

For further information about playgroup:

[www.playgroupaustralia.com.au/nsw/](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au/nsw/)

[www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/disabilities\\_play\\_and\\_friendship.html/context/1291](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/disabilities_play_and_friendship.html/context/1291)

[www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/talking\\_about\\_disability.html/context/1290](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/talking_about_disability.html/context/1290)

If you would like more information about community inclusion, we have developed a series of factsheets and checklists for families and communities.

These can be found at:

<http://www.directory.byronearlyintervention.org.au/>



# Shaping Outcomes

early childhood intervention service

> because we can