Parenting Support and Playgroups in the First 1000 Days: Why It Matters

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The Presentation

- Parenting Support - why it matters to children's outcomes.
- The powerful potential of Community Playgroups in the first 1000 days
- Weaving the evidence base into the playgroup platform
- The Home Learning Environment and the influential role of playgroups
- Engaging this new generation of parents
Parenting Support

Increasing worldwide interest in parenting support in policy and practice

• Parenting practices have the strongest impact on child wellbeing

• Supporting parents in raising their children can mediate effects of poverty

• Parents are often the most powerful change agents in children’s lives

• The **quality** of the child/parent relationship is associated with a range of positive child outcomes
Basic Parenting Support Program Logic

Target outcome

Child outcome

Mediating outcomes

Parent-child interaction

Parental functioning

and/or

Parenting support
Parenting support and community connections

A person’s well-being can be affected by the quality of their social environment and the extent to which they and their family feel supported by and contribute to their community.

Helping parents increase their knowledge of and participation in local, community-based services is important.
Figure 2: Continuum of Playgroups – Supported

**Intensive**

Families where there is significant vulnerability and risk issues, child safety issues, and involvement in the child protection system

**Supported**

Families with less complex developmental and parenting issues, that have child wellbeing issues and some strengths to participate

**Community Playgroups**

Parenting Research Centre
raising children well

Playgroup Australia
The Potential of Community Playgroups in the first 1000 days

• Community playgroups are in 80% of postcodes. They remain the most common form of playgroup delivery.

• Telethon Kids Institute 2016 reviewed AEDC data and found: Children who did not go to playgroup had twice the educational vulnerability at school entry than those who did.
RMIT Social and Economic Benefit Research

- Community playgroups are essential social supports for child rearing especially where a parent does not have a peer support network established.
- They assist families to feel less socially isolated and build a sense of place or affiliation with the local community.
- There is little difference between playgroup participation across urban and rural Australia. The wide distribution of playgroups positions them well to meet local needs. [LSAC]
So why do we need to think about community playgroups in the first 1000 days

- Parents get their advice from their playgroups- lets leverage it to ensure its good advice.

- They are important forms of parent support- peer support

- They engage families in their local communities to support each other.

- They influence the parents role in their child’s learning

- They are engaging the people who care for children who are not always their parents eg grandparents providing child care.
Weaving the Evidence Base into Playgroups
Encourage parents to use everyday opportunities for children to extend their language and learning. Examples from the *smalltalk* initiative include:

- Interact with their child in a **warm and gentle manner**
- **Tuning into their child** by giving them their full attention frequently and promptly
- **Attending to whatever** their child shows interest in
- **Listening and talking** to their children more frequently; and
- **Using teachable moments** when they arise.
Early Home Learning Environment

-------that is stimulating and rich in conversation and written language

• promotes children’s social/emotional development and communication

• can buffer effects of poverty
Home Learning Environment

- Community playgroups can mentor parents to create quality home learning environments.

- Parents/carers can understand their role and feel confident as first educators.

- Parents/carers can learn to play.
Thank you