

# Inclusive Playgroups and Play Spaces for All



In the current ever evolving and changing world we live in, it's crucial that Playgroups and play spaces remain accessible and inclusive.

Playgroups should do what's in their control to support the diverse communities around them including children and families from a First Nations background, children with a disability, LGBTQIA+ children, as well as children and families from CALD communities or with a refugee status.

Below, are some suggestions and ideas of how to tailor your Playgroup and play space to the diversity of the communities you're supporting:

## Children from a First Nations background

- Include a Welcome and Acknowledgement to Country at the beginning of every playgroup session so families understand and respect the cultural significance of the land on which the playgroup is being held.
- Have a First Nations symbol or flag present in the playgroup to make First Nations families feel welcomed.
- Encourage the learning of First Nations languages, dialects, and cultural activities through the development of play exercises i.e., playing with natural bush foods to bond children to the land and foster a 'connection to country.'
- Always ask First Nations families and children for their feedback and input on how playgroups can be more inclusive.
- Build rapport with community elders and leaders in the community to learn more about First Nations traditions and gain a greater perspective of their customs and ways of life.

## Children with a disability

- Be person centered and ensure activities are guided to the child's interests and strengths.
- Continually check in with your biases around disability and ensure societal stigmas are challenged when they arrive. It's very normal for these to come up, it's all about what we chose to do with them.
- Use inclusive person led language respectful of the child i.e., children with a disability vs disabled child.
- Ensure physical spaces are accessible i.e., ramps for those in a wheelchair.
- Upskill yourself on the NDIS funding framework and access requirements so you can assist with empowering families and yourself.

## Children identifying as LGBTQIA+

- Understand and use appropriate gender pronouns where possible i.e., she/her, they/them in written and oral communication with families.
- It's okay to ask questions and clarify if you are unsure around how a child or family member identifies i.e., are you comfortable with me referring to you as this? It's always more respectful to ask than make assumptions.
- Have a rainbow flag symbol or flag present to encourage families LGBTQIA+ families to attend.
- Encourage group activities which question gender norms i.e., boys playing with dolls and girls playing with trucks.
- Do your research, connect with leaders in the field and learn as much as you can.

## Children from a CALD background

- Consider the use of translators or translated texts into different language groups.
- Be aware of the different cultural and language groups residing within certain Playgroup areas by scoping out and completing a cultural mapping exercise including community centres and cultural hubs.
- Avoid the use of jargons and complex language in written and oral communication with families.
- Connect and learn from different cultural leaders in the community as well as learning from support networks from CALD backgrounds.
- Always ask CALD families for feedback and input on how Playgroups can be more inclusive.

It's important to remember that building inclusion takes time and works most effectively when active listening, empathy and feedback are taken into consideration to represent the diversity of the Playgroups in which you service. Starting to implement even a few of the above suggestions into your Playgroup will make the world of difference and will get easier as you build your awareness and capacity. Thank you for doing your part to help build an inclusive world for all.

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*For more information on disability and inclusion, please contact Playgroup NSW on [admin@playgroupnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@playgroupnsw.org.au).*