



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Starting an early learning playgroup (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

Starting an early learning playgroup

Objectives:

- Encourage parents with young children to **start** playgroups as a learning and support activity
- Explain that playgroups are flexible, playful environments

Introduction

From 2 years old, your child will benefit from playing and socializing with other children. Playgroups are great places for this to occur. Attending a playgroup provides a chance for your child to learn and socialize with other children, which is important for their development. They are playful, informal spaces for children that optimize your child's learning and development, and they are great places to find support for parents too!

Playgroups are sometimes organised by community organisations or other individuals but if you can't access this then you can start your own playgroup for your child and others! It is easy!

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>We know how important is supporting our child's learning before school, and to encourage this in the home environment, but also that from 2 onwards it is also useful to find a group learning experience for them.</i></p> <p><i>What are the different kinds of group learning options that are available?</i></p>	<p>There are a number of different out of home learning opportunities for children. In many communities there are day-mother care programmes which are small groups of young children (no more than six), playgroup programmes and preschools/ ECD centres. Playgroups are informal learning groups that often happen in people's home, meet a few times a week and only for a few hours. An ECD centre should be registered with the department of Social development, and has its own site and often runs for a full day. Playgroups are great for younger children, and are often attended by caregivers (such as moms and tots). ECD centres are more appropriate.</p>

<p>2. <i>Today we are focusing on playgroups. What is the value of a playgroup specifically?</i></p>	<p>Playgroups provide an environment for children and parents to learn together and for parents to support each other. Playgroups offer the opportunity for parents or caregivers to give their children valuable educational and social experiences. They can be set up quickly, are flexible and they have fewer regulatory requirements than other ECD services and can respond well to the needs of their community</p>
<p>3. <i>How is a playgroup different to ECD centres?</i></p>	<p>Playgroups are different to ECD centres in a number of ways. They are often run by parents or caregivers, they happen in a more informal environment, run for a maximum of four hours a day and are not regulated in the same way that centres are. However in many ways they are similar in that they provide an important environment for children to learn and play together in a varied.</p>
<p>4. <i>Why would a parent want their child to join a playgroup?</i></p>	<p>Parents understand the incredible importance there is for children to learn to socialize with other children from an early age, play together and also to learn in a somewhat structured group environment as a preparation for school. Ideally as well children should start in a more formal ECD</p>

<p>5. <i>So one can start your own playgroup? How does one do this?</i></p> <p>6. <i>So what is the first step – finding other families I guess?</i></p>	<p>centre from around 3 – however some parents would like their child to receive some additional stimulation or care before then and for this playgroups are good. In some areas there might also be no good ECD centres or they might be full, and so joining or starting a playgroup is a good solution. Additionally, they offer a potential network of support and social engagement opportunities for parents too.</p> <p>There are a few things you need to think about when setting up a playgroup:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find other parents who would like to participate2. Find an appropriate venue3. Organise/ buy some suitable equipment4. Think about your curriculum or daily programme5. And what the costs or financial considerations are. <p>Yes. The first thing you need to start a playgroup is at least three interested families. Talk to everyone you can think of who may be interested in a playgroup. Surveys show that most people join a playgroup because a friend asked them. You can approach your local Early Childhood Clinic or advertise in a local shop window.</p>
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<p>7. <i>What is that first meeting with the other parents about?</i></p> <p>8. <i>How do you choose a good venue for you playgroup?</i></p>	<p>If you have too many people initially, you may encourage some to start a separate group, or make a waiting list and contact those on the list when you are ready to get bigger or start another session.</p> <p>Once you have found some interested families, it is nice to involve them in the planning of the playgroup so you can arrange a time to sit down and talk. This works best without the children, so consider a meeting at night.</p> <p>This first meeting is to make various decisions about your playgroup together. The most important ones are: what the purpose of your playgroup is (why do they want to do it), what time you should meet, where, how often and how long and whether you will continue in holidays or not. Most playgroups meet once or twice a week for 2 -3 (sometimes 4) hours.</p> <p>Basic requirements are an indoor and outdoor play space that is safe and easy to supervise (although outdoor space may not always be available). A separate kitchen, suitable toilet facilities and storage space are also necessary. Consider parking facilities and distance to public transport. If</p>
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<p>9. <i>What should one do with the children?</i></p>	<p>you can't find a place in someone's house be creative - school halls, churches, community centres, ECD centres might even have space in the afternoon for you to use.</p> <p>It is important that you think about your activities and the routine you will do with the children. Most playgroups routine involves setting up, time for children to play and adults to chat, a snack time, more socialisation and play, then time for everything to be packed away and a general clean up.</p> <p>When thinking of the play activities for children, offer plenty of free play because toddlers are not ready for lengthy instructions and rules. They need plenty of uninterrupted time to make choices, freely explore and experiment. Most popular playgroup activities are painting, sandpit, playdough, cutting and pasting, bikes and playing in the fantasy/ home corner.</p>
<p>10. <i>Should children always make something to take home?</i></p>	<p>Don't expect children to always make something to take home. It is the process of doing rather than producing something that is so important for young children. Keep activities simple enough for children to do most of the work themselves.</p>

<p><i>11. What about snack time?</i></p>	<p>Plan for a break some time during the playgroup session. This may be a formal time when everyone eats together or it may be informal with children eating according to their needs. You could ask families to bring a piece of fruit to be cut up and shared, or each child could bring their own snack. Consider whether juice or water will be offered as drinks or if each child is to bring their own.</p> <p>Remember to always</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer healthy foods • Take precautions to keep things healthy and clean • watch out for danger, e.g. danger of children choking if eating while running • Keep hot tea/coffee out of reach of children • Be sensitive to food allergies
<p><i>12. Do you need a lot of toys and equipment to start a playgroup?</i></p>	<p><i>Start simple.</i> Children do not need hundreds of toys to play with, but will enjoy the interaction with you, the other children and adults.</p> <p>The play equipment you need depends on the ages and interests of the children. Blocks, balls, sandpit toys, musical instruments, dolls, pushers, baby toys, playdough equipment and books can be</p>

<p><i>13. Are there financial commitments to starting a playgroup?</i></p>	<p>shared by all. Remember you can also make and find a number of good toys.</p> <p>Costs will vary from group to group and the number of families in a playgroup will affect the amount and also other costs such as: rent, snacks (unless brought by others) toys, ongoing costs such as paint, paper etc.</p>
<p><i>14. What are the roles of the playgroup facilitator and parents?</i></p>	<p>It is good to decide the roles early and to write these up. If there is one main playgroup facilitator, their responsibility is the safety, supervision and care of all the children. However most playgroups expect the parents to stay too (if not all then most) and the roles of the parents also need to be written up then and displayed on the wall so all are clear.</p>
<p><i>15. Are there legal requirements to running a playgroup that one should be aware of when starting one up?</i></p>	<p>Yes. Importantly everyone should always make sure all the children's health and safety is of critical care and concern. Also, although most playgroups are attended by parents, there are some, where parents drop off their child for the session in the care of a playgroup facilitator. If this is the case, to fulfill the legal requirements of the department of social development, these groups should either have no more than 6</p>

<p>16. <i>What about the first few sessions?</i></p>	<p>children, or have their learning programme registered with the department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't have too high expectations on the first day as it is a new experience for everyone. • Be flexible. • Wear name tags if you don't know each other. Include your child(ren)'s names on adults name tags. • Have a few toys available for the children, preferably those which are easily shared. • Keep activities simple and plan just a few each session. • Allow plenty of time for the adults to relax and get to know each other. • A simple time-table can be useful. Be flexible but most people feel comfortable with a relaxed routine. • Have fun!

<p>Learning outcomes</p>
<p>After listening to this show the audience should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the impact of a playgroup on their child's development • Understand that a playgroup is informal and can be started by any parent

- Understand that a playgroup is not a formal activity that is the responsibility of the educational system, instead it can be initiated and run by anyone.
- Be aware of how to start a playgroup