

The Early Education Program (EEP) at Springvale Park Special Developmental School offers a parent and child playgroup once a week. Playgroup is for all families on the waiting list and for families who are not ready to commit to the EEP. Our playgroup is facilitated by an occupational therapist and early education teacher and offers families the opportunity to play in a safe and secure environment. During playgroup, families will engage in indoor and outdoor play experiences, as well as a music program.

On arrival to playgroup, children and parents engage in a variety of fun and motivating play experiences. Staff are able to model expected play skills while supporting parents to engage in shared play experiences with their children to foster positive relationships. During this time, parents are also able to interact and chat with each other, developing friendships and networks. Playgroup sessions offer the opportunity for parents to develop relationships with other families that can support them throughout their children's time in EEPs and also into the school aged program.

The music session offers families a lovely group experience where parents and children can engage with songs and rhymes. We base our music sessions on the Parent Child Mother Goose program which has an emphasis on nurturing the positive interaction between parent and child using touching and stroking. The songs and rhymes presented to parents can be used to enhance relationships and engagement of children in the family home. We endeavour to give parents the skills and confidence to support their child's development, particularly around language and communication.

Attending playgroup is wonderful preparation for children starting in our EEP or the school program the following year. Parents feel comfortable leaving their child with staff as they had developed positive relationships previously and children have learnt that EEPs is a safe and fun environment. Attendance at playgroup has supported children to separate from parents and transition into the program more seamlessly. Staff get to know the children quite well and can better group them into classes which will best support their development and learning in the program.

Playgroup sessions are fun and vibrant and have been well received by parents and children. Families attend regularly and report that they enjoy coming as it is a wonderful learning experience for them and their children.