



June 2022

Dear Colleague

We are delighted to share with you the brochure and Participation Form for the new Communities for Children (C4C) Bendigo Supported Playgroup (SPG). The brochure can be widely shared, both amongst the Early Years sector and with families.

This letter is to provide more information to enable you to identify families who may appreciate being referred to SPG and help you make referrals.

Background

C4C Bendigo is a strategic initiative funded by the federal Department of Social Services (DSS). C4C works towards delivering positive and sustainable outcomes for children and families through early intervention and prevention approaches.

C4C undertook an extensive review in 2021 and determined that was a gap in service provision for families with children aged 0-3, particularly for families experiencing barriers to community participation. We developed a SPG model that has a strong emphasis on service integration, collaboration, community engagement and capacity building. It has been developed jointly and reflects our collective learning and uses a strength-based approach.

Shine Bright is delivering the C4C Bendigo SPG and play groups started in March 2022.

Who are we?

C4C Bendigo SPG is delivered by qualified Early Childhood Educators employed by Shine Bright.

What do we do?

We currently offer 3 Supported Playgroups:

- Eaglehawk (Monday).
- North Bendigo (Tuesdays)
- Kangaroo Flat (Wednesday)

We focus on engagement, play and fun in the outdoor environments, offering activity ideas that can be easily replicated at home.

Our playgroups operate between 10 – 11.30am and have a limit of 8-10 families per group to ensure the voice of each family and child can be heard.

Whilst we have an outdoor emphasis there is an indoor option nearby should we have inclement weather.

Our focus is supporting families (parent/s, grandparent and/or carers) in a welcoming and inclusive environment with the desired outcomes of supporting child development, building the skills, knowledge and confidence of families.



C4C playgroups act as a soft entry point to the wider system of child and family services, with a focus on supported transitions and warm referrals.

Families will be connected with our playgroups for a period of approximately six months. When there is a readiness to do so they will be warmly transitioned into mainstream supports e.g. a community based playgroup or kindergarten.

Eligibility

Our priority target populations are:

- Families with children at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Families experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability (including those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds).
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families.

In addition, C4C services targets those in the community who need them most, including:

- Young parent families
- Families with low incomes
- Jobless families
- Sole-parent families
- Families with a parent (or child) who has a disability, and
- Families experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health or child protection.

Cost

Playgroup is free to eligible families.

Referral and more information

To refer a family please complete the attached Participation Form.

Each family is well supported to participate and access playgroup. We meet families and their key worker at a place that is comfortable for families so they can begin their first connections to the SPG team before they join the group.

For more information please contact Jenny Prince on 0447 576 278 (Monday to Thursday) or email jennifer.prince@shinebright.org.au

With kind regards,

Jenny