



Playgroup SA
Annual Report
2024/25

2025 Chair's Report

**A proud member of the National Playgroup Alliance...
leading the playgroup movement across Australia.**

Playgroup SA had a productive year, characterized by a sense of stability and progress, despite the volatile political and economic environment. Our focus has continued on children and families who are vulnerable, in line with our strategic priorities.

Playgroup SA's celebration of its 50th year, culminated with a reception at Government House in October 2024. Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC as the Patron of Playgroup SA, presented the inaugural awards for excellence that recognised both programs and individuals who contributed to our vision that all South Australian children are developmentally on track.

The Benefits of Playgroups

Recent research by the University of South Australia, commissioned by Playgroup Australia, used causal inference modelling to analyse data from the 2021 (Australian Early Childhood Development Census), (AEDC).

The study found that children who attended playgroups were 1.4 times more likely to be developmentally on track across all five AEDC domains—matching the benefits of preschool and exceeding those of long day care. Notably, children who attended both playgroup and preschool were 1.7 times more likely to start school developmentally on track than those who attended neither (Lam et al., 2024)¹.

These findings highlight that child development begins well before formal schooling. The first 1,000 days of life are especially critical, shaping attachment, brain development, and emotional wellbeing—while also being a time when parents need the most support.

Leadership and Oversight

The Board has achieved notable outcomes for its governance responsibilities. This includes:

- Reviewed and agreed the strategic priorities for forward years.
- Board approval of the Governance and Risk Compliance Framework.
- The Board committees (Finance and Audit, and Governance & Risk) set up in late 2024 are now value adding to the Board's accountabilities.
- Completed an independent payroll compliance audit.
- Commenced a review of the Playgroup SA 2019 Constitution.
- Completed an assessment of the Board's skills.
- Reviewed the strategic risk management framework, which shows principle risks and mitigation strategies.
- Ensured all Board members have completed the Child Safe Training modules.

Playgroup SA was certified by the Australian Service Excellence Standards in 2023. As part of its ongoing commitment to quality, the service will undergo a review in early 2026 to support its pursuit of full accreditation. Preparing for this milestone is a substantial undertaking and a strategic priority for the current year.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge the leadership and expertise of CEO Craig Bradbrook and his dedicated team, whose contributions to our success are invaluable.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my Board colleagues for their tireless dedication to fulfilling their governance responsibilities.

I would also like to acknowledge Wiebke Billows as Deputy Chair, and Quentin Crombie for his valuable contributions as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee.

We are pleased to welcome Rachel Thamm and Tapan Dave to the Board. Their expertise and fresh perspectives will be invaluable as we move forward.

At the same time, we bid farewell to Tom Veale and Ben Birch. We extend our sincere thanks to both for their service. In particular, Ben Birch made an outstanding contribution to the Board over more than six years of dedicated service.

The contribution of the league of volunteers, government and non-government service partners, families and children all add to the work Playgroup SA undertakes.

Citizens of Tomorrow

Playgroups offer a rich and meaningful experience for both children and their families. Through unstructured play, children are given the freedom to explore, grow, and develop in a safe, supportive environment alongside their parents and carers.

The benefits of playgroups extend beyond individual families—they help foster stronger, more connected communities and build resilience from the ground up.

Together, we share a collective responsibility to nurture and empower the citizens of tomorrow.



Trish Strachan

Trish Strachan
Chair
November 2025

2025 CEO's Report

Celebrating five decades of community impact, Playgroup SA continues to evolve and expand its service to better serve the South Australian community.

This year we continued our 50th anniversary celebrations. We concluded our celebrations in the first half of the year, with a series of events that recognised the history and impact of playgroups across South Australia. These included a formal reception at Government House, which acknowledged the contribution of playgroups to supporting children's development, family connection and communities coming together for over five decades. During this reception, we also welcomed the return of the Playgroup SA Excellence Awards, which provided an opportunity to recognise the dedication and long-term commitment of coordinators, volunteers, and community partners across the state. We also hosted an afternoon tea with life members, where we reflected on the days gone by, sharing stories of the challenges, the wins, and the joy that playgroup has brought over the years. These celebrations brought our network together to reflect on the profound impact playgroups have made on generations of children and families.

As CEO, I feel privileged to steward the organisation at this important point in our history. Playgroup SA continues to play a vital role in supporting early childhood development, strengthening community connections, and leading effective inclusive practices in supporting children and families.

Strategic Partnerships and Program Development

Project Einstein has continued to deliver positive outcomes for children and families, while also contributing to the evidence base for the developmental and social benefits associated with regular playgroup attendance. Building on planning undertaken in the previous year, several initiatives have progressed to implementation.

Our partnership with Nottingham Trent University has moved into the pilot phase of the MAST program, now operating across selected sites. This builds on earlier collaboration and training provided to Playgroup SA, enhancing capacity to deliver integrated, developmentally focused support within playgroup settings.

A new Aging Well Grant, secured in partnership with Torrens University, has supported a focus on intergenerational engagement, with particular attention to better understanding the facilitators and barriers to attending intergenerational playgroups.

The ILC (Information Linkages and Capacity Building) program continued development of tailored resources for culturally and linguistically diverse families, supporting inclusive approaches across playgroup delivery. As we conclude the co-design discussions and conversations with families and children, we look forward to progressing the next stage of resource development in the year ahead.

The PlayConnect+ program was extended for a further two years, ensuring continuity of support for families of children with disability or developmental delay.

Ready, Set, Progress continues to experience high demand, with the team regularly visiting playgroups, child care centres, kindergyms and library sessions to complete child development checks. Waitlists remain in place due to strong uptake. The program has now been extended through to December 2025, aligning with sector reforms and directly supporting Recommendation One of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

Public Engagement and Events

Playgroup SA reinforced its public presence this year through a series of

accessible, family-centred events that brought communities together in playful and inclusive environments.

Regional Expansion and Service Access

This year marked a significant step in our regional expansion with the opening of a dedicated shop-front space in Port Augusta. This new location will serve as a hub for playgroups and parenting programs, creating a welcoming space for families to connect, learn, and access support. It enables more consistent place-based engagement, co-located services, and improved access to developmental supports for families living in rural and remote communities.

Organisational Resilience and Governance

The Board continued to advance its strategic governance role, including oversight of compliance, risk, and performance monitoring. The maturity of Playgroup SA's governance structures remains central to ongoing growth and future readiness.

Looking Ahead

Playgroup SA concludes its 50th year with momentum and renewed purpose. Expanded partnerships, funding extensions, and regional investment reflect the confidence placed in our work. We remain focused on strengthening child development, family support, and inclusive practice across all communities in South Australia.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Craig Bradbrook'.

Craig Bradbrook
CEO

November 2025

Partnerships



Through play, connection and collaboration we are building stronger communities

In 2024/2025, Playgroup SA continued to strengthen key partnerships and deliver engaging events that celebrate the importance of play in community connection and family wellbeing.

In partnership with Cleland Wildlife Park, two nature-based events provided families from across metropolitan and regional South Australia the opportunity to connect through outdoor play and exploration. At Playgroup at the Zoo, presented in collaboration with Adelaide Zoo, hundreds of families enjoyed supported play experiences in a unique and inspiring setting.

These events highlighted the value of playgroups in building strong, connected communities and reinforced our relationships with key partners, including local councils, funders, and community organisations across the state.

The support of our funders underpins everything we do. Their ongoing investment enables Playgroup SA to deliver high-quality programs, inclusive community events, and vital support for families through playgroups across South Australia. Through their commitment, we can reach more families, strengthen community connections, and promote the benefits of play for children's development.



Parents and caregivers say attending playgroup...



90.1%

Supported my child's development



86.5%

Increased my child's social skills (interacting with others, sharing)



78.6%

Increased my child's fine motor skills (holding and using paintbrushes)

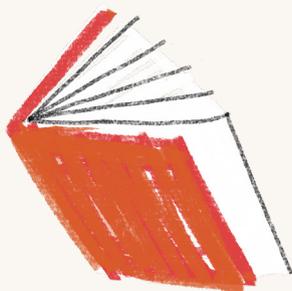
70.8%

Increased my child's language skills



83.9%

Increased my child's physical activity and gross motor skills (crawling, climbing, running)



94.3%

Enabled my child and I to have fun together



72.4%

Helped me feel more confident in my parenting

89.6%

Gave me more ideas for play activities at home

88.5%

Helped me feel more connected with other parents

78.6%

Helped me connect with more people and services in my community



Playgroups in South Australia



Playgroup SA supports a strong and diverse network of playgroups across South Australia, reaching families in metropolitan, regional and remote communities. Through partnerships with community centres, councils, early childhood services and local volunteers, playgroups provide welcoming spaces where families connect, children learn through play and communities grow together.

Playgroups take many forms, including community-led groups, organisational and Department for Education playgroups, supported playgroups and intergenerational sessions that bring older friends and children together. This variety ensures that families can find a playgroup that suits their needs and interests, wherever they live. Playgroup SA works closely with community partners to make quality play opportunities accessible for all families.

180

Organisational

39

Regional

15

Supported playgroups

210

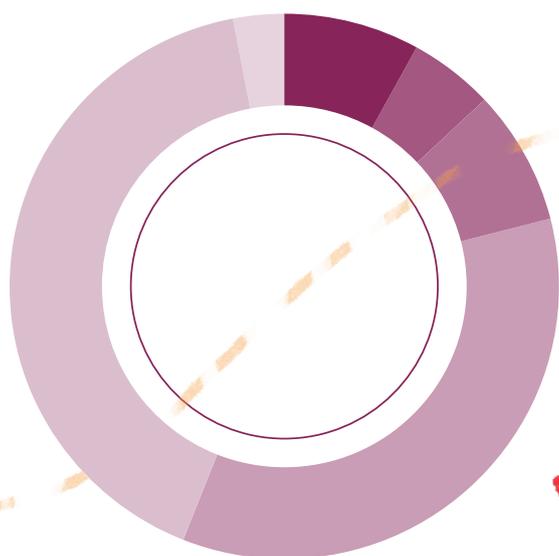
Department for Education

28

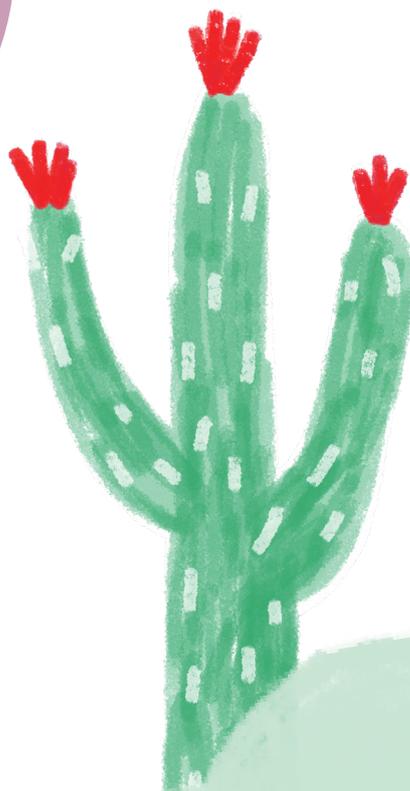
Metropolitan

42

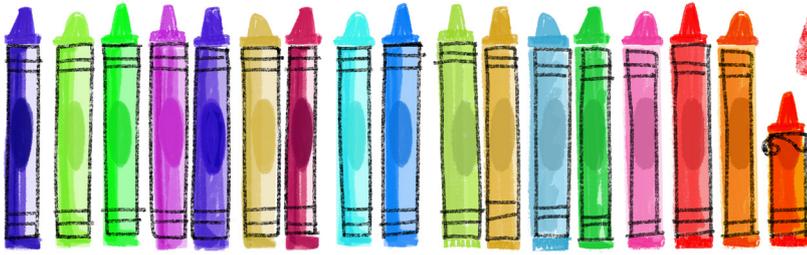
Intergenerational



● Regional	8%
● Metropolitan	5%
● Intergenerational	8%
● Organisational	35%
● Department for Education	41%
● Supported Playgroups	3%



Family Enrolments

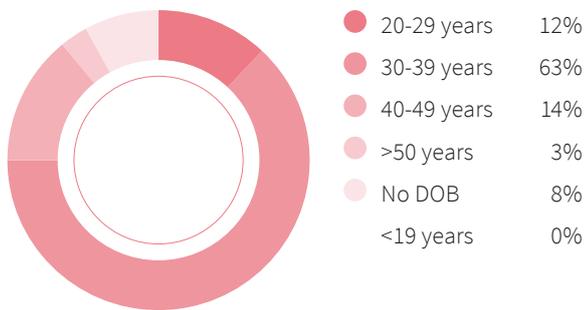


1641 Parents attending playgroups

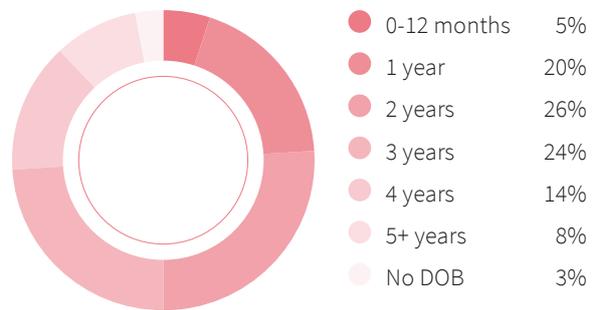


2108 Children having fun at playgroups

Ages parents/ caregivers



Ages children



Demographics

150

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families (CALD)

33

First Nations Families

Supported and Specialist Playgroups



Playgroups	Sessions
PlayConnect + Playgroups	249
PALS Playgroups	40
Pt Augusta Programs	271
Uniting SA Playgroups	124
PEEP Ingle Farm	30
PEEP Callington	38

118

Support Sessions

45

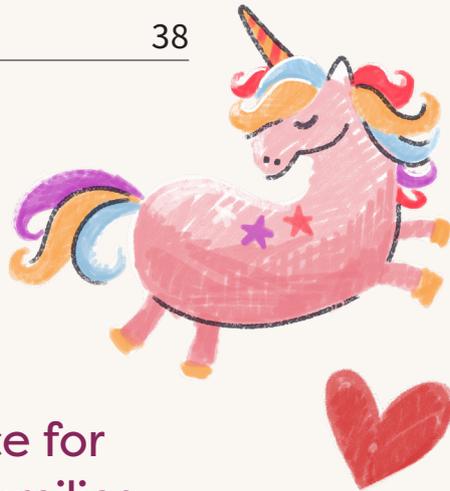
Families Supported

86

External Organisations promoted/accessed

123

Referrals



Family Linkers Making a Difference for South Australian Families

Family Linkers at Playgroup SA are creating real and lasting change for families across South Australia. Their role is to walk alongside families, providing practical, hands-on support to help them access early intervention services, navigate systems, and connect with the right supports for their child's development.

Through understanding each family's unique situation, Family Linkers take the time to listen, build trust, and offer guidance that empowers parents and caregivers to make informed choices. Whether it's linking a family to speech therapy, connecting them with community supports, or helping them understand developmental milestones, the focus is always on early help and meaningful connection.

In the past year alone, Playgroup SA's Family Linkers have supported 45 families, providing 118 individual support sessions and making 123 referrals to services and supports. Their work has also helped families connect with 86 different external organisations across the state, strengthening community networks and ensuring no family feels alone in their journey.

By bridging the gap between families and services, Family Linkers are helping South Australian children get the best possible start in life. Their impact is seen not just in the numbers, but in the confidence, connection, and hope they help to build within families every day.

Family Enrolments and Demographics

of specialist and supported programs

326

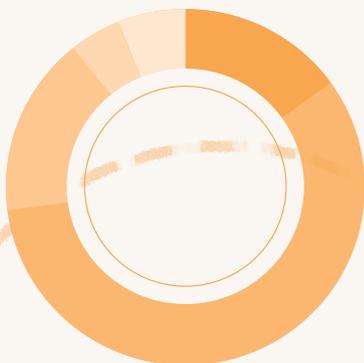
Parents attending supported playgroups

476

Children participating in supported playgroups

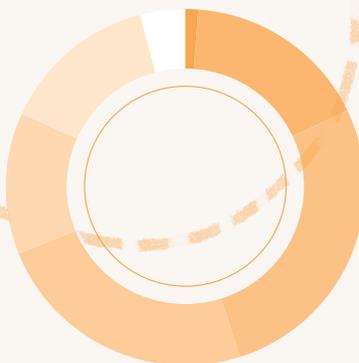


Ages of parents/ caregivers



- 20-29 years 23%
- 30-39 years 50%
- 40-49 years 15%
- >50 years 4%
- No DOB 8%
- <19 years 0%

Ages of children



- No DOB 9%
- 0-12 months 5%
- 1-2 years 37%
- 3-4 years 34%
- 5+ years 14%

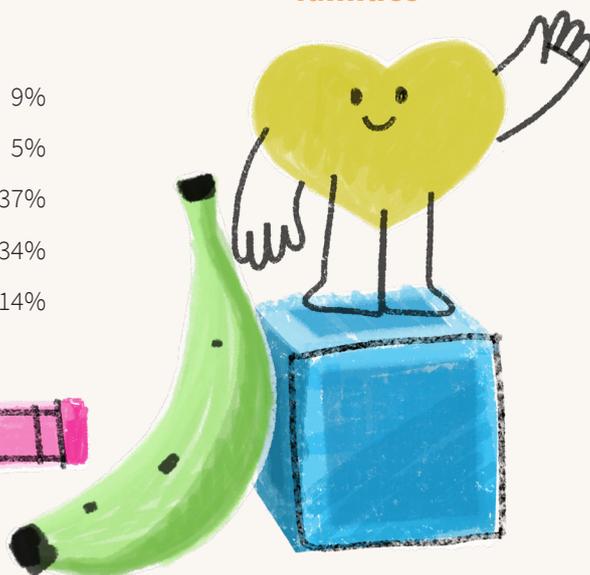
Demographics

45

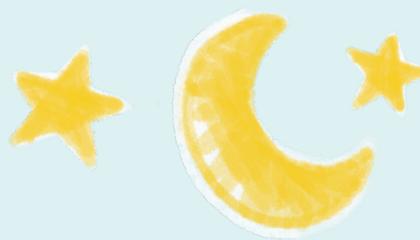
CALD families

76

First Nations families



Ready, Set, Progress



The Ready, Set, Progress Program successfully secured additional funding from the Office for Early Childhood Development to continue delivering Child Development Checks. This extended funding enabled the program to broaden its reach by engaging with families through a wider range of community settings, including library story times, kindergym sessions, and pilot initiatives within childcare centres.

To connect with families not currently engaged in playgroups or early childhood activities, the program also conducted a series of pop-up events in local shopping centres and playgroup events including Playgroup at the Zoo and Mud Play at Cleland Wildlife Park. Regional outreach was expanded to include Port Pirie, Bordertown, Millicent, and Penola, ensuring greater accessibility to developmental support across South Australia.

877 Child Development Checks were completed in playgroups and other community based programs.

877

Child Development Checks

108

Follow-up checks

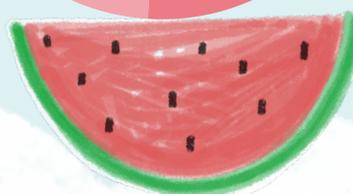
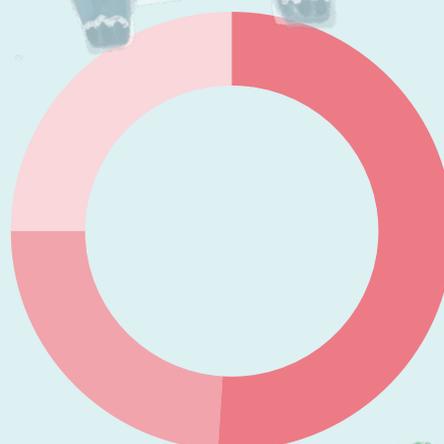
119

Information sessions at playgroups

348

Early Help and Support sessions

- Developmentally on-track 51%
- Required monitoring 24%
- Required further assessment 25%



Treasurer's Report 2025

For the period ending 30 June 2025 (FY25), the annual financial statements of Playgroup SA Incorporated (Playgroup SA) were prepared by Purpose Accounting, following the organisation's transition from its previous accountants in May 2025.

Nexia Edwards Marshall continued as external auditor and, in line with professional standards, undertook an audit partner rotation as part of this year's engagement. Nexia issued an unmodified audit opinion for the FY25 financial statements, confirming that: (i) the accounts present a true and fair view of Playgroup SA's financial position and performance; and (ii) comply with the Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

Playgroup SA's total comprehensive income for FY25 was a surplus of \$64,102, following a loss of \$78,578 in FY24. The improvement reflects enhanced grant reconciliation processes, utilisation of unspent funds from prior years, and timing differences in grant income and expenditure. Total revenue increased to approximately \$2.6 million, supported by program growth. Employment expenses increased due to expanded program delivery and a change in long-service-leave recognition.

Playgroup SA's financial position remains strong, with net assets of \$552,500 as at 30 June 2025 and cash reserves of approximately \$1.18 million. Contract liabilities decreased as prior-year grant funds were fully applied to program delivery. The full set of financial statements will be published on the ACNC website in due course, and in the meantime, a summary is presented below.

Looking ahead, the Board has approved a small deficit budget for FY26 to support targeted investment in systems, governance, and workforce capability as Playgroup SA prepares for Service Excellence re-certification. This reflects the organisation's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and sustainable service quality. The Finance and Audit Committee will continue to oversee financial governance and support management in identifying efficiencies and new revenue opportunities to maintain long-term financial resilience.

Quentin Crombie
Treasurer
October 2025

	FY25	FY24
Revenue	\$	\$
Grant income	2,549,043	1,933,084
Memberships	52,232	49,307
Interest income	6,505	6,671
Other income	16,995	18,545
Donation received	3,557	0
Total revenue	2,628,332	2,007,607

Expenditure		
Administrative expenses	(261,018)	(255,784)
Occupancy expenses	(20,715)	(5,881)
Employment expenses	(1,991,750)	(1,590,318)
Membership and program fees	(164,275)	(166,113)
Finance costs	(17,001)	(8,069)
Depreciation and amortisation	(109,471)	(60,020)
Total expenses	(2,564,230)	(2,086,185)
Operating Surplus/(deficit)	64,102	(78,578)

Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	0	0
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Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	64,102	(78,578)
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Balance sheet	2025	2024
Current Assets	\$	\$
Cash & cash equivalents	1,184,244	1,115,609
Trade and other receivables	1,160	333
Other assets	31,774	60,054
Total current assets	1,217,178	1,175,996

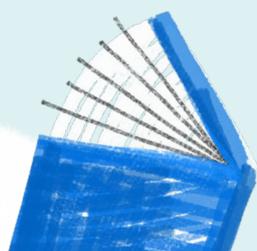
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	22,264	16,154
Right-of-use assets	168,718	257,421
Intangibles	0	0
Total non-current assets	190,982	273,575
Total assets	1,408,160	1,449,571

Liabilities	2025	2024
Current Liabilities	\$	\$
Trade and other payables	221,569	100,042
Contract liabilities	230,246	502,648
Provisions	211,012	96,025
Lease liabilities	100,598	88,960
Total current liabilities	763,425	788,035

Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	11,295	0
Lease liabilities	80,240	173,138
Total non-current liabilities	92,235	173,138

Total liabilities	855,660	961,173
Net asset/equity	552,500	488,398

Accumulated Surplus		
Retained surplus	552,500	488,398
Accumulated Surplus	552,500	488,398





Playgroup SA

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