

# state of Play

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF PLAYGROUP SA  
Issue Four, September 2017

## ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY

THE BENEFITS OF  
ROUGH-HOUSING

PLAYING IN TUVALU

PLAYGROUP  
GOES BUSH



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## LEARNING TO PLAY, PLAYING TO LEARN

Welcome to the September edition of State of Play. This edition signals for Playgroup SA the end of a very cold winter and time to explore the great outdoors again. Spring has sprung and it's time to get outside and enjoy the change of the season.

Spring also signals the preparations for our Playgroup at the Zoo event. We are excited to be bringing you this great day once again. We've made some changes this year, which hopefully means you'll be able to get more out of the day. Keep your eye out in this edition for the save date notice and mark it in your calendar. We'll be sending out information about the day to each Playgroup soon.

We are very excited here at Playgroup SA to be able to say we have Angela Hanscom from Timbernook sharing her knowledge on rough and tumble play, and why it's an important part of child development. Angela J. Hanscom is a Paediatric Occupational Therapist and the founder of TimberNook, an award-winning developmental and nature-based program that has gained international popularity. She holds a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy and an Undergraduate degree in Kinesiology, with a concentration in Health Fitness. [www.timbernook.com](http://www.timbernook.com)

We're also fortunate to have the AEIOU Foundation contribute to this edition of State of Play. Make sure you look out for their article.

The Playgroup SA team have also been very busy crossing the state to provide Playgroup services to all Playgroups. If you would like a visit, advice or information from any of the staff here at Playgroup SA, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carley Jones'.

**Carley Jones**  
Executive Officer  
Playgroup SA

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# *The first steps in your child's learning journey*

**COME AND TRY PLAYGROUP TODAY!**

Some of the benefits and experiences at Playgroup include:

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- Safe exploration
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- Routine
- Messy play
- Socialisation
- Problem Solving
- Affordable for your family



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**ROUGH AND TUMBLE PLAY**

*allows children to explore changing their positions in space, learning the limits of their strength, controlling impulses...*



# ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY

Develops strong and capable children

words by ANGELA HANSCOM

Three young boys and two girls scramble up a large dirt hill, almost in unison. One boy gets to the top first and screams, “King of the hill!” Another child laughs and playfully pushes the boy aside, “No. I’m king of the hill!” Each child takes a turn trying to be king of the hill. Laughter rings through the woods as they play this game – covered in dirt, from head to toe. Adults watch this playful scene from a safe distance, many of them with a smile on their face.

Most of us fondly remember playing similar games growing up. Rough and tumble play, also known as “big body play,” rough-housing, horseplay, or play fighting comes in many forms, such as wrestling, rolling around, climbing on top of each other, pretending to fight, superhero play, and chase games. In its more organized forms, we see games like: King of the Mountain, Red Rover, Steal the Bacon, Duck-Duck-Goose, and Freeze Tag.

Rough and tumble play is something that is enjoyed here at TimberNook, both by the observant adults and the children, but is certainly not celebrated in many programs today. The fear of producing “aggressive children” often limits or restricts this form of necessary play both in the home and in the school environments. From the 1960’s through the 1990’s, it was actually

thought that observing or imitating others in this sort of play inspired aggressive and hostile behaviour. Rough-housing was discouraged, and early childhood programs were encouraged to “defuse rough play before it becomes a problem” (Council for Professional Recognition 2007, 31).

Recent research has been proving the contrary: that rough and tumble play does not produce aggressive children (Klein, 2010). In fact, restricting “big body play” can have detrimental effects on the growing child. More and more children are starting to have trouble regulating how much force to use when playing games like tag and other chase games. Tag in some schools is being banned because children are getting “more aggressive.” Teachers are also reporting that kids “can’t seem to keep their hands off each other” during recess sessions. Why is this happening? There has been a significant decline in the amount of unrestricted outdoor free play children have on a regular basis, and rough and tumble play is becoming all but extinct.

Lack of rough and tumble play reduces the opportunities for rich, proprioceptive (“heavy work”) experiences necessary to develop and fine-tune the senses in the joints and muscles. This is why occupational therapists will often

recommend that parents wrestle with their children. Children benefit from “rough-housing” with family and friends to develop strength, the senses, and control of both. Children learn how to calibrate and regulate their movements when wrestling children and adults of varying ages and abilities. For instance, an older child may purposefully be more gentle when wrestling with a much younger child.

Rough and tumble play allows children to explore changing their positions in space, learning the limits of their strength, controlling impulses, also regulating fear and anger, finding out what other children will and will not let them do, and working out social relationships as they play roles, take turns, and sort out personal boundaries (Raising Children Network, 2010).

Young children enjoy very physical play. And for good reason! It is a basic human instinct to play fight, test limits, and gain new skills. Instead of letting fear get in the way, we need to allow for all types of play – not just those that are calm, quiet, and “safe.” Our children need to challenge their senses, motor skills, and abilities in order to organise the brain and develop new skills in life. It is our job to provide the time, space, and opportunity to do so.

Angela Hanscom is a Paediatric Occupational Therapist and the founder of TimberNook, an internationally recognized program in the United States and New Zealand. She is the author of the non-fiction book, *Balanced & Barefoot: How Unrestricted Outdoor Play Makes for Strong, Confident, and Capable Children* published by New Harbinger.

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## AFFILIATE YOUR PLAYGROUP WITH PLAYGROUP SA TODAY!

Playgroup SA is a not-for-profit, community based organisation committed to providing quality services to families with young children throughout South Australia. By affiliating with Playgroup SA, you'll join a community of up to 300 Playgroups across South Australia and gain access to a range of valuable benefits and resources.

Become a part of the Playgroup SA network. Access to workshops, planning resources, event planning, marketing support, mediation, insurance, special events, coordinator-only social media forums and more!



## New centre for children with autism



### AEIOU Brighton opening soon!

Enrolments are now open for our high-quality, evidence-based early intervention program for children with autism aged 2-6 years.

For more information visit [aeiou.org.au](http://aeiou.org.au) or call 1300 273 435



# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Learning your child has autism can be a daunting experience.

A simple online search can leave you overwhelmed with information on the many available therapies, strategies and supports available.

*But, what is autism? What does this mean for your child? And, how can you best support them?*

These are just some of the questions parents of newly diagnosed children are seeking the answers to.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder affecting the way a person communicates and relates to those around them. While there is no known cause or cure for autism, there are steps you can take to ensure your child has the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

Autism affects people in three main areas, known as the triad of impairments: social interaction, social communication and social imagination. It is also a spectrum condition, which means while all people with autism will share certain areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in different ways.

*What this looks like:*

Impairments in social interaction mean your child may find it

difficult to make eye contact with others, make friends, and appear unresponsive. Remember, your child may want friends and to socialise, but for some, it does not come naturally and, as a result, they may need to be explicitly taught these skills.

Your child may have delayed language or speak with unusual or repetitive language. They may have difficulties approaching others and starting conversations. Some individuals with autism take language literally and as a result find it difficult to understand sarcasm or metaphors.

Social imagination affects a child's ability to think flexibly and as a result your child might be rigid with certain routines e.g. wanting to drive to school the same way. Some people with autism have unusual fixation or fascination with a particular item, activity or topic. This can be an issue if it affects your child's ability to learn new skills or engage in other activities, however, for others, it can be a real strength (Look up Temple Grandin!).

*So, if there is no cure, what can you do?*

Research shows that intervention at an early age can make a significant difference.

A program which provides specialist support to develop your child's essential life skills, independence

and confidence, will give them the opportunity to achieve best outcomes.

## About AEIOU Foundation

AEIOU Foundation provides evidence-based early intervention to children with autism and their families. Focusing on children in the pre-school years, aged two to six, we provide individual programs in a group setting, which include a minimum of 20 hours therapy per week. All programs are delivered by trans-disciplinary teams of behaviour therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and educators who are all autism-specific trained. We offer a family centred service which focuses on supporting and upskilling parents, carers, and key support workers to achieve shared end goals. AEIOU also provides families with assistance to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

AEIOU is excited to be opening a new centre in Brighton, Adelaide this year; with places for more than 40 children and their families. The purpose-built centre will have state-of-the-art facilities, designed to ensure children receive therapy and cure in an environment suited to their needs.

To find out more about our new centre, please phone us on 1300 273 435, or visit [aeiou.org.au](http://aeiou.org.au)

## RISK TAKING IN CHILDREN

Risk taking has become a bit of a buzz phrase when discussing early childhood development lately.



You may have seen the phrase at your child's early education and care setting, or heard about it in the news, or on various child related Facebook pages. So, what exactly are we referring to when we discuss risk taking in children?

Risk taking is activities or experiences which allow children to push their limits and test their boundaries. It is experiences which allow children to begin to know their strengths and limitations. Risk taking allows children to learn about the environment around them as well as master the equipment within their surroundings. Providing opportunities to participate in risk taking also enables children to develop skills to negotiate, and the opportunity for coordination to develop.

*Ok, but what is a risk taking opportunity?*

A risk taking activity could be described as one that has the potential for injury. It can also be described as thrilling or exciting and has an element of adventure. Given this is the case, how do we manage these risks at Playgroup or even at home?

*What exactly is a risk taking activity?*

Activities such as climbing, sliding, balancing, jumping from heights and hanging upside down can be considered as risky (Tovey, 2010). For toddlers, risks can simply include learning to walk or trying to climb a slippery dip the 'wrong way'.

Managing risks can include the following:

By reviewing the environment to ensure only acceptable risks are present in the play environment. This could include assessing activities and equipment for the following:

- What is the likelihood of coming to harm;
- The severity of that harm; and
- The benefits, rewards or outcomes of the activity.
- Establishing and displaying expectations for behaviour
- Actively encourage children to assess risks and possible consequences. Talk to children about what could happen as a result of their actions.
- Considering the ages and stages of the children who will make use of the activity

## “ACTIVITIES SUCH AS CLIMBING, SLIDING, BALANCING, JUMPING FROM HEIGHTS AND HANGING UPSIDE DOWN CAN BE CONSIDERED AS RISKY.”

We can also help ensure risk taking is in a controlled manner by watching for the various personalities at Playgroup. It's helpful to identify the children that are risk takers and providing them with some boundaries

and closer supervision. On the other side, families can identify the risk adverse and give them the support and encouragement to have a go and partake.

Movements that are often associated with risky play, such as, swinging, climbing, rolling, hanging, sliding, are not only fun for children but also essential for their motor skills, balance, coordination, and body awareness. Children who do not engage in such movements are more likely to be clumsy, feel uncomfortable in their own body, have poor balance, and a fear of movement. The role of a Playgroup is to create a play environment where children can engage in movements that fulfil their sensory needs (Greenland, 2006, pgs. 189 – 190).

*Why is it a good idea to allow children to take risks?*

There are many benefits to allowing children to participate in some risk taking, including;

- For their own enjoyment of achieving. Developing their sense of accomplishment
- Development of their self-confidence and well-being
- Engagement with the natural environment and natural elements.
- Learning through experience. It is through experiences that children learn.
- Mixing between different age ranges allows children to push themselves and also be considerate of others when learning.

- Skills to negotiate. Provides the opportunity for coordination to develop.

*What are the results of not allowing children to participate in risk taking?*

When children are not given the opportunities to participate in any form of risk taking, they are not given the opportunity to develop their resilience. Their confidence and skills are also not given the opportunity to develop.

Overall, whilst it can be a bit scary at times as adults to allow risk to take place in the play environment, it is crucial to development that children are allowed the time and space to throw themselves into risk taking activities. If we can monitor and supervise the risk, then children should be able to develop the necessary skills to succeed later in life, without too many broken bones!

### RISKY behaviour that can be beneficial

For babies - crawling over different surfaces

For toddlers - slippery dips (up the wrong way), walking, climbing objects including the couch/chairs

For pre-schoolers - climbing trees/larger items, racing bikes, jumping off elevated objects

# PLAYGROUPS IN TUVALU

Learning to read and write doesn't begin at kindergarten or the first grade. Developing language and literacy skills begins at birth through loving interactions – sharing books, telling stories, singing songs, and talking to one another. - *(National Centre for Infants, Toddlers and Families, 2012)*

**Words** Carley Jones



I'm guessing that not many "State of Play" readers would have heard of, or know much about the small island nation of Tuvalu. Let me give you the basics...It's located in the Pacific Ocean, about a 3 hour flight in a tiny plane north of Fiji. It's one of the most remote countries in the world, and also one of the least developed. The country is made up of 9 islands and is the mid way point between Australia and Hawaii.

So, why did we make the trek to Tuvalu? To spread the word about and establish Playgroups of course! The mission was part of Playgroup SA's staff ongoing involvement with the PEARL project (Pacific Early Age Reading and Learning) through

The World Bank Group and Global Partnership for Education.

Our first trek to Tuvalu was in February of this year, to scope the capacity of the preschools and preschool teachers to host a weekly Playgroup, and to introduce the concept of Playgroup to the local staff and families. Tuvalu staff and Government officials were welcoming and excited about the prospect of Playgroup commencing.

In May, we once again made the trek to train up local staff on how to establish and deliver Playgroup and provide them with practical advice, information and resources on Playgroup. It was a busy week with staff coming from all the islands

which make up Tuvalu, coming into Funafuti the main island to attend training. Some staff had travelled for up to 24 hours by boat just to attend!

We crammed into a local preschool to learn all things Playgroup, and what a fun few days it was. We were able to share with the Tuvaluan parents and preschool teachers the critical development window for children between birth and the age of 5, the importance of learning through play, the role which Playgroup plays during these early years and the positive impact on development.

More importantly, we were able to have some fun participating in getting our hands busy learning about sensory play together. Sensory



play was a new concept to the staff of Tuvalu and it was great fun watching them engage in gloop, water play, sand play, making cloud dough and various other messy activities. It was a challenge to come up with alternatives for sensory play, as most ingredients we take for granted in Australia, are not available in Tuvalu.

We also had a creative building activity competition using scrap materials which ensured there was plenty of laughter for all. The creations were wild and varied and ended up on display in the Ministry of Government Offices!

The teachers of Tuvalu were extremely generous in their hospitality during the workshops, but also in sharing their culture, including their glorious singing.

Upon our return to Australia, we have received updates from the Ministry of Education's staff that all islands have commenced a number of Playgroups, and they are being enjoyed by many families and children aged birth to 5. The Playgroups are focussing on sharing local foods which have been replaced in recent times by the lure of imported foods. Culture is being shared once again at Playgroup. Ministry Staff report that the Playgroups are being visited by the Tuvalu nurses for sharing health

information. This is a fantastic achievement for a small nation, which has no early childhood options prior to preschool. We hope that they continue to enjoy Playgroup and it continues to have a positive impact on child development as it does here in Australia.

We thank all involved for the opportunity to share with Tuvalu the importance; but also the joy of Playgroup and we thoroughly enjoyed our time training and sharing with the people of Tuvalu.

If you would like to make a difference locally please contact us to volunteer at Playgroup SA or with one of our affiliated Playgroups.

## SAFETY IN THE HOME

Carolyn Ziegler gives us hints and tips to keep our children safe in the home.

CHILD SAFETY INTERVIEW with Carolyn Ziegler, Co-Founder and Product Development Director of Dreambaby®, the child safety and care brand.

**Many first time parents don't know what to look out for when it comes to childproofing the home, what advice can you give them?**

Right from the beginning invest in blind cord wind-ups. They keep blind cords out of the reach of babies in their cots and from older siblings in general. Over-long cords can be very hazardous and lead to strangulation. But remember to keep cots and beds away from windows and window fittings whenever possible.

Once children become mobile, there are the obvious steps - block off power points with outlet plugs and move sharp objects, knives and poisons including medicines up and out of reach. Watch out for the sharp corners on tables. Get down on all fours and look up

at the world from the point of view of a crawling child. It's amazing the hidden dangers you will immediately identify.

**What would you consider to be a potential safety hazard in and around the home?**

I don't want to scare you but there are many hazards throughout the home.

However, with preparation, a lot can be improved on safety wise. Move regular medications usually kept in the bathroom or beside your bed up and out of reach of a child, and preferably locked away. Keep children out of cabinets and drawers by properly securing them with child locks and latches. Prevent doors slamming on little fingers by securing them using a door stop or under door gripper. Preparation and recognising the potential issues is what it's all about. Remember though, every house is different, and every child is too. Your child may never even look twice at

a cabinet, but what about that visiting cousin or friend? They may have other ideas so make sure your home is secured for all children not just your own.

**What should we look out for?**

We need to look out for the obvious and the hidden dangers. Remember children learn and discover the world by experiencing things and unfortunately that can sometimes mean getting hold of a knife from the drawer, or unplugging the computer, or pulling on that tablecloth - so be aware at all times. Preparation, moving things out of reach, locking things away, using a gate, keeping children within site, and only allowing your child to be supervised by a trustworthy and loving adult are all important precautions.



**If the lounge/ living room is the child's play area do you recommend not having a coffee table at all?**

Choose either a very rounded cornered table that is really solidly made (NO GLASS), or nothing at all. Remember to also keep an eye on any food and coffee that you place on your table as they can be a hazard of their own

**What about falling furniture?**

Children can be crushed from falling furniture. Nowadays furniture is designed with all the features at the front for aesthetic reason but the backs are very flimsy. It's simple physics that they topple. Always secure heavy furniture with straps or anchors. And make sure you install them correctly. You need to follow the instructions and always secure them to a solid part of the furniture and a solid part of the wall. And don't forget about free-standing flat screen TVs – always secure them with straps.



# WIN!

Simply email your name and age of your child/children to WIN one of THREE safety packs from Dreambaby®! Valued at \$65.70

Email your entry to Playgroup SA:  
[competitions@playgroupsa.com.au](mailto:competitions@playgroupsa.com.au)

Win all the child safety products mentioned in this article including:

Dreambaby®s Blind Cord Wind Ups (2 pack RRP \$4.95) to help keep blind cords out of reach of babies and toddlers, Outlet Plugs (12 pack RRP \$3.95) to block off powerpoint, Furniture Straps (2 pack RRP \$10.95), Furniture Anchor (RRP \$10.95) and Flat Screen TV Savers (2 pack RRP \$14.95) to help stop furniture and televisions falling on your little ones plus a 26 piece Household Safety Kit (RRP \$19.95) which includes a Multi-Purpose Latch and Safety Catches to secure a variety of drawers, cupboards, toilets and more. Total value of prize is \$65.70. 3x prize packs to win. Entries close 15 November 2017.



# GOING BUSH WITH PLAYGROUP

Skye Rudiger, Barossa Bushgardens Playgroup Coordinator, talks about the benefits of outdoor Playgroup.

In this edition, we take a look at a unique, but fabulous bush Playgroup in the picturesque Barossa Valley. Emma Sordillo, Playgroup SA's Communications Coordinator caught up with Skye Rudiger to get the insight on this marvellous Playgroup.

The Barossa Bushgardens Playgroup appealed to Skye because it was a place where parents and children can enjoy unstructured play in a child-led, nature based, outdoor Playgroup.

Skye resides in the Barossa Valley with her husband Matt and daughters Bella and Lola. Skye took over the coordinator role of the Bushgardens Playgroup back in late 2016. Skye coordinates the group on a fortnightly basis, with a fellow Coordinator taking charge of a monthly Saturday session.

The Rudiger family loves being outside and exploring and Skye tries to encourage her daughters to use their imagination wherever possible. What makes the Barossa Bushgardens Playgroup so unique is the venue. The Playgroup is fortunate to have the use of a great play space within the Barossa Bushgardens which is a native flora centre. Many of the plants grown at the bush gardens are native to the local area. The Bushgarden is a fantastic environment for children to not only play outdoors but to learn about their environment by playing in it.

Skye first started attending Playgroup to enable her daughters to play in a safe, fun place where they could play and build confidence interacting with other children and adults, and develop the social skills they will need as they enter kindy and schooling.

Community Support for the Playgroup has been overwhelming with volunteers and staff at the Bushgardens always being extremely helpful and supportive. "The Playgroup has the use of a large sand pit installed for the Playgroup by the Bushgardens, staff are always keen to improve our play area by making seats from logs of wood, cutting out 'stepping stones' from large old branches, and keeping our play area neat and tidy with regular weeding."

Bushgardens also has several wooden 'mud kitchens' which were originally made and donated by volunteers in the community at the Barossa Men's Shed. The venue also enables Playgroup to be involved in the local community as it is an established community enterprise developed by volunteers dedicated to preserving locally found native plants. Bushgardens Playgroup also took part in the recent Barossa Vintage Festival 'Scarecrow Mania', an event run by The Barossa Bushgardens staff and volunteers, encouraging families to come to the Bushgardens and build their own scarecrows. The Playgroup was also involved in the annual Barossa Bushgardens Open Day in May this year, running a small stand with activities for children.

Some of Skye's top reasons why families should consider attending a Playgroup include;

- Playgroups help your children (and yourself) to meet new people, build new friendships and start to prepare for school.
- Playgroup is a fantastic way to encourage your children to try something new, something that perhaps you couldn't be bothered with or encouraged to do at home.

- Playgroup can be a great place to share information with other parents of similar aged children.

Skye shared that attending Playgroup had benefited her family as both her daughters had become more confident interacting with other children and adults. It has helped them all to build new friendships and meet new families they would not otherwise had the opportunity to meet. Playgroup has taught Skye the importance of helping her children to experience new things and to not be afraid of getting out and meeting new people.

Finally, Skye shared one of her favourite moments from Playgroup. "Last year, the group celebrated International Mud Day by digging up a patch of dirt and turning it into a mud pit. Two brothers who regularly attend Playgroup had a go at mud wrestling, got absolutely covered in mud and had a ball."

Skye recommends bringing a spare change of clothes and a towel to Playgroup.



Interested in becoming a Playgroup Coordinator? Contact Playgroup SA on Free Call 1800 171 882.

## PLAYGROUP SA EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Playgroup SA Workshops and Events are open to all families with children aged birth-5 years.

We are getting to the end of the year, many of our events have already passed, but luckily we still have the biggest event of the year and more!

### PLAYGROUP AT THE ZOO Friday 20 October

Time: 10am - 2pm  
Place: Adelaide Zoo

Playgroup SA's HUGE Annual Membership Event - FUN for the whole family. There will be so much to do including messy & loose parts play, craft activities, face painters and children's performers. Tickets on Sale NOW via [www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au)

### CHRISTMAS PLAYGROUP Thursday 7 December

Time: 10am - 12noon  
Place: Playgroup SA - Play Room

The Jingle Bells are ringing and it's time to get festive. Our extremely popular Christmas themed Playgroup is full of fun Christmas themed activities.

## •WORKSHOP•

### CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Explore the issues of child protection, gain an understanding of child abuse and neglect, learn about your responsibility to report concerns about children at risk and receive your certificate in Child-Safe Environments (CSE).

Tuesday 10 October, 9:30am - 4:30pm

We have so many events throughout the year - make sure to follow us on Facebook to hear about our upcoming events or visit [www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au) to register

To register for an Event or Workshop visit [www.playgroupsa.com.au](http://www.playgroupsa.com.au)

# Book Competition



Enter our Scholastic book competition! Tell us in 25 words or less why you enjoy reading with your child/ren. Email your entry to Playgroup SA: [competitions@playgroupsa.com.au](mailto:competitions@playgroupsa.com.au)

Entries close 15 November 2017.

Entry open to all residents of South Australia. For full terms and conditions email: [info@playgroupsa.com.au](mailto:info@playgroupsa.com.au)

Follow us on Facebook for regular prize giveaways!

Playgroup SA Members receive E-Play Newsletter via email with great prize packs and give-aways up for grabs!



# Give back!

Give back by volunteering your time to the most fun non-profit community organisation around! Playgroup SA needs volunteers on a casual basis, as well as on-going. We would love to have you for a day or a year...

Playgroup SA is looking for volunteers to help us run the event *"Playgroup at the Zoo"*  
Contact us at [info@playgroupsa.com.au](mailto:info@playgroupsa.com.au) to register your interest

*Volunteering with Playgroup SA is a great way to gain experience in a different field or update your resume with new skills!*

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