



"Rug up and make your way to playgroup - a great place to visit when the weather is cold and rainy!!"

Hi! from the Coordinator,
So playgroupies winter is here!! (suddenly it seems!?!). Our playgroup is ready for indoor play - made cosy by our recent purchases of new indoor mats, with pillows and baby "gyms" to arrive any moment, plus great new craft bits and pieces for all to enjoy during those rainy days. Rug up and make your way to playgroup - a great place to visit when the weather is cold and rainy - gets the kids out of the house for a few hours and we can all feel good when we catch up with our friends!

Join in the fun for the first round of 'structured' activities with an early childhood music and movement class. If you have any ideas or contacts for activities you think our members will enjoy I'd love to hear from you!

Our winter garden is looking fantastic thanks to our hardworking gardener Sharon Stone and her lovely assistant Fiona (Friday1). Feel free to exercise your inner green thumb and offer Sharon assistance in keeping our garden so colourful.

Can I also just remind you all that EVERY member from EVERY session is responsible for leaving our playgroup clean and tidy. It only takes 5 minutes at the end of a session if everyone helps out. See you in the playground!

Mel Burkett

Your committee:

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SING A LONG, DANCE ALONG!



Music is a natural accompaniment in a toddler's life. Young children might sing to their stuffed animals, tap their feet to the rhythm of nursery rhymes, and enjoy the sound of their parents singing to them - even if mum and dad can't quite carry a tune. But an early introduction to music does more than entertain. It can kick-start learning, serve as an important cue in your child's routine, and offer lifelong benefits.

Music contributes to what experts call 'a rich sensory environment'. This simply means exposing kids to a wide variety of tastes, smells, textures, colors, and sounds - experiences that can forge more pathways between the cells in their brains.

These neural connections will help a child in almost every area of school, including reading and math. Just listening to music can make these connections, but the biggest impact on your child comes if he or she actively participates in musical activities.

You will also find once your toddler is familiar with music, it can be a source of comfort and soothing. Don't be surprised if you hear your child singing in bed or while playing, or serenading dolls or stuffed animals, especially if you have made a habit of singing to him or her yourself.

When music is part of the everyday routine, these songs can help your child know what to expect and feel more secure. For instance, if you always sing a lullaby at bedtime or naptime, your child will come to see this as a cue for 'go to sleep.'

Therefore we are very excited to announce that dates have been booked at Playgroup for a great early childhood music program! **Sing Along, Dance Along.** The dates are as follows:

Wed 18th July @ 10.15am - toddlers

Thu 19th July @ 3pm - bubs under 1 year

Tue 24th July @ Midday - bubs under 1 year

Friday session date still to be confirmed - will be 10.15am start time for toddlers.

Most of you would know that at our committee meeting in May it was decided that some fun activities for all members to enjoy would be organised, rather than spending our playgroup funds on more toys!

Details and feedback of the music program will be posted on our notice board. To start off, 4 sessions have been booked - if you can not make it to these sessions never fear - if the sessions are a success we will book again (and change the dates/times around).

Please note: Put your name down (on the notice board) regardless if it is your "regular" playgroup session - we need to keep track of approximate numbers. Sessions are 1 hour long - please remember the start time to ensure you are on time and please try to be on time so that any disruptions to the sessions are kept to a minimum! At this stage members are restricted to attend one session only (so that others do not miss out!)

Note that there are 2 sessions for bubs under 1 year (no toddlers to these session if possible, so that the under 1's get a chance on their own!!).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Membership fees Jul to Dec 2007.

For new members joining from now until the end of the year, there is a joining fee of \$30, then casual rates apply - \$2 per session attended.

The Friday 1 Session Leader.

Just to let you know that Amy Gerstl has kindly put her hand up for Session Leader of the Friday 1 session - thank you Amy! BUT for everyone's

information Amy is due to have her second bub in August, so will be looking at passing on the role by the end of July - so if you can help out, please have a chat with Amy and let me know if you have any questions. Please note that for any session to continue a session leader must be appointed - more than 1 person can share the role too!

➤ **The organisation of the Eastern Zone Playgroup Annual Childrens' Festival**, which is held in September every year, will swing into action again soon, and this year we are looking to pool resources! We are looking for anyone (Dads included) who can volunteer their services in the following fields: Publicity and Promotions; Business, Sponsorship

and Entertainment Co-ordinators; Site Management; Catering; and Treasurer. We know that everyone's free time is both limited and precious, but the Festival is a massively popular (and FREE) day for all families and your help would be hugely appreciated. A list will be posted on the playgroup notice board soon for you to add your (or your husbands!) name.

DOUBLE DUTIES

Working through the early years

When I first found out I was pregnant with my daughter I was overjoyed, not just at the thought of impending motherhood but at the thought that my 'rat race' days were over, if not indefinitely at least for a while! I can vividly remember sitting on a train in the rush hour, crushed for space, hot, bothered and tired and calculating just how early I could begin to take my maternity leave. What I hadn't expected when I finally left my career behind was how utterly lost I would feel without my professional persona. It didn't happen straight away of course, but slowly and surely I began to wonder if I knew who I was anymore. Sure I was the mother of a gorgeous little girl and 2 years later a wonderful little boy, but who else was I? Where was that capable business woman who ran 18 magazines and a staff of 50 people?

I always wanted to be a stay at home mum, and despite the moments when I have felt like I was going insane, it's the best thing I have ever done!!! But I felt there was something more I wanted to do than just be defined by my children. I wanted to work as well as be a full-time mum. I understand that many women have no choice and have to return to their careers for financial reasons. I understand that many women have trained long and hard for their career and are reluctant to give that up. And I definitely understand that returning to work can simply be about having a choice and trying to have it all.

However, I am discovering that there is a growing band of women like myself, who are managing to find a balance between sacrificing everything to raise your children and reinventing themselves in new careers that work around having children.

In my case I have found I can continue working on graphic design

projects in the UK - as the time difference is allowing me to be with my children all day and then work in the evenings when the UK goes online. At times it is very tiring and I would give anything to be sitting in front of the TV with a glass of wine in my hand. But it has been amazing in the fact that I have been able to keep my hand in my career, earn a reasonable amount of money without having to hand over all my earnings to child care and feel much more confident about who I am.

To this end I wanted to show case just some of the women I have met who are pursuing a double life as both mothers and bread winners!

Cocoon Clothing was set up in 2003 by Kirsty Marr and Susan Wynne. They design children's clothing and believe their day to day mothering experience gives them a unique position to be able to design clothes that satisfy the children and mothers. *"Being mothers ourselves, we know that kids want clothes that express their personalities. Mums, on the other hand, want clothes that look great but are absolutely practical, clothes that can handle the day to day challenges that kids throw at them. We created Cocoon to do both wonderfully."*

I caught up with Kirsty recently when she and Susan had a very successful morning selling their clothes within the Tea Gardens Cafe in Watsons Bay. We brainstormed about the idea of creating a market like Bondi or Paddington but where every stall was run by mothers promoting their own businesses. I am pretty sure if the environment was child friendly, as the Tea Gardens are, it would be a raging success.

Charmaine Wright does stunning family photography. Her philosophy is that these days we all have a digital camera and we take snap shots, 1,000's

of them. They sit either on the camera for a while or on the hard drive for ever.

What's missing is capturing a child's personality and getting a photo that's so good you can put it on the wall. Charmaine's ability to put children at ease, means she is able to capture candidly, their unique personalities. Usually outside, not confined to the unfamiliar studio.

Charmaine's business ethos is to make it easy, including a service where she puts the photography in an album, makes them into a DVD and put them all on disc to email. In short she does all the things we mean to do but never get round to!

Picture 2 Puzzle is run by Nyree Osborn, mum to Megan 3 and Kiera 1. Her successful business takes a family photo and turns it into a magnetic photo puzzle which your family will cherish. These beautiful puzzles combine your child's egocentric side with their love of jigsaws! And even better you aren't left picking up all the pieces as they stick to the fridge!

Artist and designer Lisa Tilse, mum to 3 year old Roxy, produces vibrant, contemporary and fresh art under the name **The Red Thread**. Her work includes enchanting commissioned children's portraits and whimsical personalised art. Mermaids, pirates, super heroes or butterflies bearing your child's name and swimming, swashbuckling, saving the world or fluttering across the bedroom wall!

None of these ideas are original concepts, but they are inspiring in that they are all run by mothers who have found a niche and just go one step better than their mass market alternatives. So don't rule yourself out of the work force. Combine your previous work skills with all your new found parental skills and give yourself a new lease of life. It can be profoundly satisfying to reinvent yourself.



Cocoon Clothing



Charmaine Wright Photography



Picture2puzzle



The Red Thread

Contacts: www.cocoonclothing.com.au
www.picture2puzzle.com.au
www.theredthread.com.au (from August)
and **0438 717 570** for Charmaine Wright.

AND FINALLY...

My daughter suffers from food intolerances, which are not to be confused with food allergies. A food **allergy** is an abnormal reaction by the body's defense system to proteins found in food, and symptoms are immediate. Severe allergies can result

in the potentially fatal state known as anaphylaxis.

Food **intolerances** are reactions to chemicals found in food, both natural and added. These reactions are not a response by the immune system but are instead thought to be the result of

irritation of the nerve endings. They are rarely associated with the food most recently consumed. Symptoms can be emotional and behavioural or physical such as rashes, eczema, colic and even asthma. I have become absorbed in trying to alleviate my

daughters symptoms by looking at her diet. An excellent place to start is the food intolerances web site. And to be honest it's worth a read even if you think your child is not affected. You'll be amazed by what you'll learn.

www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info