



Recovery plan for families with children

Many families with little ones are wondering if they can return to having play dates with friends or recommence their playgroup catch-ups. Whilst the Western Australia Government's (the State's) and the City of Wanneroo's (the City's) plan is quite clear on returning to libraries or community centres, there are many grey areas about socializing with your children and other families.

The City has collated best practice guidelines and information from trusted organizations to ensure you are well informed to make the right choices for you and your children.

General information

- Ensure you are abiding by the [State's COVID-19 Plan](#) - in particular the [State's gathering restrictions](#).
- Keep up to date on the [City's Recovery Plan](#) for playgrounds, libraries and community centres for reopening and specific guidelines.
- [Safe Work Australia](#) have announced physical distancing guidelines only apply to adults in an Early Childhood Education and Care Service (and only in staff rooms or entries/hallways), which is good to know when thinking of visiting others.
- [Playgroup WA](#) continues to provide up to date information.

It is **your choice** as to whether or not you feel comfortable in catching up with friends and re-introducing your little ones to social interactions, especially in larger groups. The following information has been obtained from Safe Work Australia, Playgroup WA, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, WA Department of Health and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

When attending or hosting a playdate

- **Do not** attend or host a play date if you have come into contact with anyone who has COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 until cleared by your Doctor.
- **Do not** attend or host a play date if you, your child or anyone residing in your home is unwell in any way.
- Before attending or hosting a play date wash yours and your child's hands thoroughly with warm soapy water or hand sanitizer.
- **Do not** share food or drinks, plates, cups or cutlery and ensure drink bottles and food containers are labelled.
- Maintain social distancing between adults.
- **Do not** expect children to social distance! It just won't happen and we can't expect it to.
- Continue to hug and kiss your own children and comfort them as you usually would.

- If you are approached by a friend's child, do not refrain from interacting physically if this is what you would usually do. Continue to comfort children as you usually would.
- Throughout the visit, continue to wash yours and your child's hands with warm soapy water or hand sanitizer, paying particular attention to:
 - Before and after eating
 - Before and after toileting, including nappy changes
 - Before and after wiping a child's nose, or your own
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow, and encourage your child to also.
- If your child is immobile, take your own play mat and toys – wash them with warm soapy water before and after your play date. Have disinfectant wipes on hand to wipe down at the play date if they are accidentally touched by others.
- If mobile children mouth toys, once finished, remove for cleaning to prevent another child touching or mouthing.
- If children are mobile, wipe down shared toys regularly during the play date.
- Wash yours and your child's hands after the play date.
- Keep in touch in case anyone shows signs of illness over coming days.

Handwashing

Our best defence against the spread of infection is to wash our hands with soap and water. Dr Asha Bowen, an infectious diseases researcher at Telethon Kids Institute and Paediatrician at Perth Children's Hospital, recommends that parents and children wash their hands for 30 seconds. And the best way to do this is to make lots of bubbles and sing a song such as 'Happy Birthday' out loud from beginning to end.

[Watch Dr. Bowen](#) and other researchers talk about good hand hygiene and a range of other topics related to you and your family.

Cleaning toys and surfaces

Early Childhood Education and Care services across Australia abide by the cleaning practices in the document

[Staying Healthy - Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) which states toys should be washed in warm water and detergent or in a dishwasher. Surfaces such as benches, door handles etc., can also be wiped with this method.

In addition to the regular toy cleaning - kinetic sand can be placed in the freezer and/or in the sunshine, fabric objects can be washed in a washing machine, and play dough should be thrown away if used by more than one child or family.

In the home environment, disinfectant wipes can be used as an alternative to warm water and detergent.

More helpful information

Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA)

[PANDA](#) provides support to help expectant and new parents. PANDA has recently published a resource for those who are worried or experiencing symptoms of anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic or other global crises and disasters.

Emerging Minds

[Emerging Minds](#) provides assistance for parents and carers who are feeling overwhelmed. This curated selection of resources will assist parents and carers on how best to support

their children and reduce worry and distress. It contains a video, fact sheets and tips about what you can expect and how to help children cope.

Ngala

[Ngala](#) support parents, families and communities to enhance the well-being and development of children and young people. They have a Parenting Line for all of your parenting questions and concerns for children aged 0-18 years of age.

Raising Children Network

[Raising Children Network](#) provides parenting videos, articles and apps backed by Australian experts. It contains information for pre-birth to 18 years of age, including COVID-19 updates for families.

Commissioner for Children and Young People

[The Commissioner for Children and Young People](#) page includes information for children, young people, parents and educators. There are links to a range of resources, including how to stay safe online, living healthy and what do when you feel worried.

Department of Education WA

The [Department of Education WA](#) aims to deliver high quality education to all students in all learning environments. Support is available for any family struggling with returning to school during COVID-19.

Playgroup WA

[Playgroup WA](#) have some great play ideas for children and babies, including home-made toys.

CoLab - Collaborate for Kids

Telethon Kids and the Minderoo Foundation are proud to partner on [CoLab](#) (Collaborate for Kids). A child's early years - from conception to the start of school - set the foundation for their future wellbeing and success. CoLab is committed to disseminating research about what works best to support young children's development and learning.

Check out the new app utilising ground breaking research into the early years which will assist parents and carers develop their child's life skills while going about their daily routines.