



CITY OF WANNEROO LIBRARIES

CHECK US OUT

it's
all about
play
in the library

it's
all about
you and me

the story behind the programs

We are
eSmart
Smart. Safe. Responsible.

library.wanneroo.wa.gov.au

Play is the highest form of research

ALBERT EINSTEIN



Developed by the Childhood and Youth Services Team,
City of Wanneroo and supported by the Australian
Early Development Census.



It's All About Play in the Library is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
4.0 International License.

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be
available at wcslib@wanneroo.wa.gov.au
Further details: library.wanneroo.wa.gov.au





How **It's All About Play** in the Library started

It's All About Play was designed to complement the existing early year's activities hosted in the City of Wanneroo (the City). The City sponsors many local community playgroups by providing low/ no cost venues from their local community centres and works in partnership with non-for-profit organisations to ensure family services are needs led.

The City is also instrumental in the delivery of the statewide Better Beginnings program of introducing the 6 pre-literacy skills to all new babies across WA and **It's All About Play** adds value to these core services.

Also in 2013 the results of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) (known then as the Australian Early Development Index) 2012 were released. The results showed that some children in the City were experiencing developmental difficulties and that 23.7% were identified as developmentally vulnerable in one or more domain.

There are five domains identified in the AEDC and they include:

- Physical Health and Wellbeing
- Social Competency
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

You can read more about the AEDC ahead.

Community consultation, combined with the high attendances at existing early years activities, and the results from the AEDC prompted us to look more closely at the way we supported the families and young children in our suburbs. How could we support children to reach their fullest potential, and how could we support their first teacher – the parents?

We soon decided that it really is **all about play**. The importance of play for optimum development is well established. In fact, it is considered so important that it has been recognised by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a basic right of every child.



So we went about designing a program that would increase the understanding of the importance of play in early childhood development. This is achieved by:

- Engaging families in play and learning activities to support the development of young children's physical health and wellbeing, social competency, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge;
- Building on parents' knowledge and skills by providing practical information on the importance of play to encourage and facilitate play in the home;
- Providing access to professionals who can support the parents and give consistent messages on child development;
- Increasing families' awareness of the services available in the City and beyond, that support and enhance family well-being.

The first sessions of **It's All About Play** commenced in 2014 with a pilot program developed over 18 months across various locations within the City of Wanneroo including parks, Community Centres and the Wanneroo Library.

The pilot was evaluated and in 2016 it was decided that **It's All About Play** would become **It's All About Play in the Library**.

Libraries are inclusive and open to everyone from babies through to adults and provide year round access to resources and services that support reading and literacy. Research has shown that introducing a young child to the library is one of the most significant things a parent can do to make a difference to their child's later education – developing a library habit early in life gives children a head start. It made sense to use this valuable resource to host **It's All About Play**.

An extensive training program was developed and library staff and volunteers participate in the training which runs every few months. **It's All About Play in the Library** currently runs weekly during school terms at all of the City's Libraries. The City's Childhood Development Planners have also shared the program and delivered the training to the City of Canning, the City of Fremantle and the Banksia Grove Child and Parent Centre.

The **It's All About Play** hosts catch up regularly to share stories and it is estimated that over 30,000 participants engaged with **It's All About Play** during 2019!

The program is covered by Creative Commons License, so is able to be shared easily. We just ask that the City is acknowledged when it is delivered by other Local Governments or agencies.





What is **It's All About Play in the Library?**

It's All About Play in the Library is a free program designed for parents to enjoy with their children. It is a place for families to come and relax, pop their phones onto silent and to play with their child in a safe and inclusive environment.

The activities are designed for children from birth to five years of age. There is no need to book and parents can come and go as they please. Some families come for the entire two hour play session, but there is no obligation to do so and many of our families say that this is a big attraction for them.

There are five session plans which relate to the five AEDC domains so there are subtle changes in each of the sessions, but also a range of consistent play activities including play dough, puppets and kinetic sand, just to name a few.

The families are welcomed at the beginning of the session with an introduction to the session's domain / theme, a 'Hello' song followed by more singing and a brief outline of the morning's activities. The session is then very much driven by the children's play. Parents are encouraged to participate in the play, or to sit back and watch what their children enjoy. Some parents rarely get this opportunity in their busy day-to-day lives, and are surprised by what their children are drawn to playing with.

At each session, there are 'key messages' which relate to the domain / theme. These messages are usually mentioned at the beginning of the session, however each library does tailor the session to suit their community. **It's All About Play in the Library** is also proud to host Child Health Nurse Drop-In Clinics at their sessions, and other professionals, to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is discussed with parents.

'My son loves the outside play – he is happy to leave my side now – something he would never do. So thanks all of you.'

PARENT ATTENDING **IT'S ALL ABOUT PLAY** WANNEROO LIBRARY



The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) provides a snapshot of early childhood development in Australia. There have been four sets of data collected to date – 2009 (some areas), 2012, 2015 and 2018. Information is collected on individual children around Australia who are in their first year of full-time school. School teachers answer questions for each child in their class.

There are approximately 100 questions across five areas (called domains) of child development:

Physical health and wellbeing – measures children’s readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills;

Social competence – measures children’s overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approaches to learning and readiness to explore new things;

Emotional maturity – measures children’s pro-social and helping behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention;

Language and cognitive development – this school based domain measures children’s literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy;

Communication skills and general knowledge – measures children’s communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context.

The AEDC provides a national measurement to monitor Australian children’s development. It provides evidence to support policy, planning and action for health, education and community support. The AEDC can assist governments to develop flexible approaches to policy and planning that address the evolving needs of children and families in the future.

With four sets of AEDC national data collected in 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018, we now have an indication of the national progress towards improving the development of Australian children. With each successive wave of data collected, the AEDC will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the state and progress of early childhood development in Australia.

As the environments of children improve, it is anticipated the AEDC data will demonstrate a higher proportion of children who are ‘developmentally on track’ and fewer children who are classified as ‘developmentally at risk’ or ‘developmentally vulnerable’.

This chart shows the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the Wanneroo community in each domain, and across the three data collections to date. It is pleasing to see the reduction in vulnerability between 2012 and 2018.

WANNEROO COMMUNITY Percentage of children (%)	Physical	Social	Emotional	Language	Communication
Developmentally vulnerable in 2012	10.7	7.8	7.9	8.7	10.4
Developmentally vulnerable in 2015	9.1	8.7	8.3	6.1	8.9
Developmentally vulnerable in 2018	8.4	7.1	7.1	6.7	6.4



The AEDC and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

When designing **It's All About Play in the Library**, it was important to ensure the session plans were informed by evidence. The AEDC information was therefore used alongside the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF is a key component of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres.

The EYLF has five learning outcomes for children aged 0-5 years:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators



It's All About Play Session Plans

The five session plans all have the following components:

- The title which is aligned to one of the five AEDC domains
- The outcome which is aligned to one of the five EYLF learning outcomes
- Objectives which are aligned to all of the above
- Facilitator notes
- Key messages for families
- Extra messages (eg: physical activity recommendations or screen time recommendations)
- Running a Session guidelines
- Suggested rhymes and songs
- Activity details and required resources
- Constant positive experiences which are included in all play sessions

The staff and volunteers have received training on how to deliver each session, are given a Volunteer handbook, and receive weekly emails about the upcoming sessions.



'It's All About Play is one of myself and my son's favourite community activities. It is a fantastic service with a well thought out programme and dedicated and committed staff and volunteers involved. City of Wanneroo and all involved should be congratulated for recognizing and facilitating such an important and valued service in the community. 10/10!'

PARENT ATTENDING **IT'S ALL ABOUT PLAY** YANCHEP/TWO ROCKS LIBRARY



Home-made toys and Playsheet Booklets

A big component of **It's All About Play in the Library** are the home-made toys and experiences and the take home Playsheet Booklet.

The booklet is designed to use at home and extend the play experience that the child may have had in the session. It is also a gentle reminder that children can learn through play without having to pay.



**'My husband is happy to bring my son when I can't.
It's the only place they attend together.'**

PARENT ATTENDING IT'S ALL ABOUT PLAY WANNEROO LIBRARY

Partnerships



Whilst consulting with families, many said they were feeling overwhelmed with information, with much of it conflicting. It was therefore important to ensure the families had access to professionals who were up to date with the latest Child Development research. The City has been fortunate to partner with the Edith Cowan University (ECU) Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic. This is a free Perinatal and Infant Mental Health service and training program offered at the ECU Psychological Services Centre. It provides an early intervention service aiming to ensure optimal psychological, emotional and social wellbeing of mothers, fathers, infants, young children and families from pregnancy through to 3 years.

Clinical Psychology interns provide this specialized service to the public under direct supervision of experienced clinical psychologists. The intern is able to be involved with the **It's All About Play in the Library** session for the entire two hours, chatting with families and providing informal support or more intensive support via the ECU Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic.





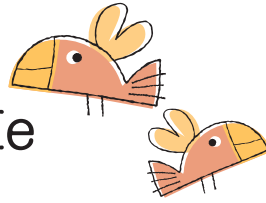
The City has also partnered with Child and Adolescent Community Health .Each week the Child Health Nurses operate their drop in clinic alongside **It's All About Play in the Library**. Families do not need to book, they simply pop in to see the Child Health Nurses and they can chat with the nurses or weigh or measure their children. This service operates from all of the sessions on most weeks. The nurses are also able to pop into the play session and chat with the families in the play environment.

There is also the opportunity for other professionals to drop into the **It's All About Play in the Library** sessions. Speech pathologists often attend during the 'Communication and General Knowledge' or 'Language and Cognitive Skills' sessions.

'It is such a great program. I love it, the kids love it, and I bring friends along and they love it too. The staff are wonderful and the program is run very well.'

PARENT ATTENDING **IT'S ALL ABOUT PLAY**
ALKIMOS POP-UP LIBRARY

It's All About You and Me



In 2017, the City took the opportunity to pilot a Pop-Up Library model, in partnership with Lendlease, at the Gateway Shopping Centre in Alkimos. Shortly after opening, **It's All About Play in the Library** commenced weekly and is currently led by a volunteer.

In consultation with the ECU Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic, it was decided to place one of their interns into the play sessions for a term. The ECU Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic were receiving quite a few calls relating to Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and were unable to keep up with the demand, hence placing parents onto a waiting list. The parents were informed that whilst on the waiting list, there was also the option to attend **It's All About Play in the Library** where an intern would be attending.



It was during this term that the Childhood Development Planners were witness to some very rich and fulfilling conversations between the parents and the intern. The Pop-Up Library is small, and at the time was only frequented by up to 10 or 12 families. The intern was able to facilitate small group discussions and it was apparent that the parents were benefitting by these discussions immensely.

It prompted the Childhood Development Planners to think about offering a similar program to **It's All**

About Play in the Library but smaller, dedicated play sessions partnering with lead agencies or community groups to deliver targeted messages within an overarching theme.

It's All About You and Me became a pilot project in 2019. There are five session plans, so the program runs over a five week period and the themes are determined by the lead agency or community group. The Childhood Development Planners work with the lead on developing a program logic so the outcomes are clearly identified.

It's All About You and Me has been developed as a sustainable model. The Childhood Development Planners worked in a pilot phase throughout 2019 with promising results.

Because of the already established partnership with the ECU Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic, it made sense to pilot the first two groups of **It's All About You and Me** with them. The overarching theme of the sessions was therefore Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and the sessions were heavily supported by the ECU Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic interns.

The third pilot of **It's All About You and Me** took place with a small group of Indigenous families who were looking for support to bridge the gap in their community between Indigenous and non-Indigenous families. Their goal was to create a playgroup model for all families with young children. The Childhood Development Planners were able to work with the group and support them in identifying their five session plans.

The intent is now for the groups to continue their sessions with limited support from the City. This provides opportunities for students, volunteers and other organizations to support the groups to become completely sustainable.

The **It's All About You and Me** model is still in its early days, and its structure lends itself to a wide variety of opportunities. The City can consider using this model in partnership with another agency or with a community group, depending on the needs of the Community. The Childhood Development Planners are able to work with agencies or groups to develop tailored session plans based on an overarching theme.







It's all About Play is managed by the Childhood Development Planners Karen Dales-Anderson and Hayley Cann, and hosted by Library Staff and volunteers.



It's All About You and Me is designed in consultation with agencies and/or community groups and sessions can be held in any location within the City.

Contacts

If you would like to hear more about **It's all About Play** or **It's All About You and Me** please contact Karen Dales-Anderson on **9405 5907** or Hayley Cann on **9405 5942**.

PICTURED OPPOSITE, KAREN AND HAYLEY AT IT'S ALL ABOUT PLAY IN WANNEROO LIBRARY.



 City of
Wanneroo

23 Dundobar Road, Wanneroo, WA 6065
Locked Bag 1, Wanneroo, WA 6946

T : (08) 9405 5000 F : (08) 9405 5499
After Hours : 1300 13 83 93
E : enquiries@wanneroo.wa.gov.au

wanneroo.wa.gov.au



Mentally Healthy WA