

Tips on how to return early years programs safely to your youngest hub participants.

Running playgroup onsite at the hub

Sonya Morrisey, Riverview State School, Ipswich Queensland.

- I took my lead regarding playgroups from the Department of Education. In Queensland, they sent out a communication outlining what could be run during COVID-19 and the restrictions that apply.
- I have provided extra signage regarding sanitising hands, social distancing and staying at home if you or your child is unwell.
- I advertise on our Facebook page and clearly state that we have a limit of 10 families able to attend. I also ask parents for their phone numbers.
- I use toys that can be very easily cleaned (Duplo blocks, train set, balls, puzzles) and have removed harder to clean items (dress ups, soft toys, toy food). Any playdough that has been made is disposed of straight after playgroup and no paints are kept either. As our numbers are smaller, we are able to offer fewer activities but create better connections with children and families.
- My advice to anyone who wants to reopen the hub is to check with the guidelines as set by the state Department of Education around what can occur in the school.
- Consult with their principle and then work out what is most important to the community. It is very time-consuming cleaning and washing materials. We have come back with a much smaller amount of activities, these were activities that our parents were most interested in. ***We can't be everything to everyone.***

Running playgroup offsite

Silja McIvor, Woodridge North Primary School, Logan Queensland.

- I hosted an informal playgroup at a great little park just around the corner from the school. I simply discussed my plan with my school management and my hub coordinator and as they were happy, I went ahead.
- The park I chose is great as it is in a very quiet space with no through traffic and a very big green space with lots of gumtrees, a little playground and a picnic table with a roof.
- I brought a big washable picnic blanket, a washable tablecloth for the table and a few gross motor toys such as big balls and some balancing beams. I also brought my guitar to sing songs with the kids and a book to read. Towards the end of term when there

was not much community transmission, I also brought some playdough and cookie cutters.

- I also had antibacterial wipes along, both to clean equipment as needed and to clean hands.
- As a snack I brought bananas and mandarins as they are beautifully pre-packaged but I made it clear that I wasn't serving any proper morning tea in this time and it was up to parents to take some of the fruit and to give it to their children.
- For the first part of the playgroup we used the playground and the big natural space for playing and running around and then we finished with everyone sitting in their own space and us singing kids' songs and finally me reading/ telling a story.
- The vibe was really good and, in some regards, having the big open space was more fun than being inside our building.

Running playgroup offsite in partnership with an early years' service provider.

Jina Dwaraknath, Marsden Road Public School, Liverpool, NSW.

- Before entering the school, families were required to complete and sign a form at the school office stating that they were not ill and did not have COBID-19 or have been in contact with anyone with the virus.
- Strict 1.5 metre social distancing - large tarp was laid out on the ground. Hand Sanitizer to be used before joining the group.
- Two x 40 minute sessions available with a 20 minute break in between each session allowing all the families to leave before the next session started.
- Maximum 10 adults per session, families were booked in prior with no drop ins. This ensured no one was turned away and/or no overcrowding.
- Any equipment touched was wiped down with disinfectant immediately.
- Session consists of songs, storytelling and arts and crafts. No toys or play equipment to be displayed.
- Each child was given a craft pack in a sealed envelope to prevent any cross contamination, the pack included paper, activity books, crayons, pencils etc.
- No sharing of craft equipment.
- No food offered during the session.