

# Parents of Tots

## Simple Secrets for Successful Playgroups

### Set right size

The general advice on this is to keep the group size small: 3 to 5 families. It is best when the children are close in age and/or skill level.

### Get acquainted

Exchange names, phone numbers, email addresses and home directions. Discuss any allergies or fears (i.e. bee stings, peanuts, milk, dogs or loud noises). If all personalities don't immediately blend, stick with it. You'll be teaching your children, by your example, how to get along with all kinds of people.

### Schedule play dates

Playgroups usually meet on a regular basis, bi-weekly, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly. Mark your calendar...regular attendance will help the group grow and build stronger bonds.

If you meet in the parent's home it should be on a rotation basis. If a member does not think they have room in their home to host the group, they can try to find another suitable place such as the library, church, playground, state park, walk with strollers, zoo, etc.

Set appropriate time length. Generally, around two hours is good, though you can gauge this once you get to know the children's needs. In the beginning it's always better to make the session shorter than longer. And keep in mind...nap schedules. Discuss a "no sick child" in attendance and bad weather cancellation plan.

### Snacks

It usually works best if the host provides the snacks. Discuss any special dietary needs.

### Activities

Most groups really enjoy unstructured playtime, just kids and toys, where moms have time to connect and socialize. Other groups like more structure. You can read a book out loud, sing and play musical instruments or do a craft. You can make holidays and seasons exciting with theme parties and activities. To make it easier you can share the duties: one can host and arrange the snack, while another mom plans the activity.

### In Conclusion...

Playgroups are one of the best ways for kids to learn friendship-making skills as well as build their self-esteem. Playgroups will help develop social skills such as taking turns, sharing, cooperating and solving conflicts. However, playgroups don't only benefit children; they can be a lifesaver for parents as well. You can catch up on current events, linger over a cup of coffee, and connect with your community. Over time, each playgroup will develop its own personality and style. It will change as the children grow and all the members get to know each other better. Some groups become good friends for a lifetime, others merely see playgroup as a way to socialize before school begins. By following the simple secrets, your playgroup will be a valuable and unique life experience for you and your child.

Contact [potfieldtrips@yahoo.com](mailto:potfieldtrips@yahoo.com) to join now!