

NO JAB, NO PLAY POLICY

Playgroups and Creche Services such as those provided by The Spiers Centre are not required under the *Public Health Amendment (Immunisation Requirements for Enrolment) Act 2019 (WA)* to cite or keep on record current immunisation certificates.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the above, please ask for the Spiers Centre's Coordinator for Community Services who will be happy to speak with you.

Playgroup WA Statement:

With the recent discussion in the media, Playgroup WA would like to take this opportunity to clarify for members and supporters to help everyone understand why playgroups were not included in the recent No Jab, No Play legislation.

CEO David Zarb recently had a discussion with several media outlets informing them that the decision to keep playgroups out of the "No Jab, No Play" legislation is not a loophole but recognition that playgroup is essentially a local informal activity operated by families within the local community that is not suited to legal oversight.

Playgroup WA recognises that putting playgroups under a legal framework would be impossible without changing the whole nature of playgroup and the way they are funded and operated. It is the same reason playgroups do not have all the legislation that applies to formal services such as the Early Education and Care sector.

Playgroup WA respects how individual playgroups are in control of how sessions are run, the fees they charge, the venues they use and membership rules as the independence of local Playgroups is fundamental to the very nature of how playgroup operates.

Playgroup WA has always recognised the benefits of immunization and supports Government efforts to increase rates of immunisation to protect children from preventable disease through practical and workable legislation such as the newly introduced rules for formal early childhood programmes.

The whole playgroup movement has been based on the principal that each playgroup acts as an autonomous group and must decide on what works best for them. Striking a balance between the protection of members and being open to new families at playgroup is ultimately up to the individual playgroup and playgroups make many decisions, from how to manage hot drinks and the safety challenges that an individual venue might have.

Decisions about immunization and membership are also up to each playgroup and Playgroup WA is happy to assist and advise playgroups on the development of policy decisions made at the local playgroup level.

Over the past decade Playgroup WA has not heard of a single incident of playgroup attendance being connected with illness related to immunization issues. We do not say this to minimise the importance of immunisation but to put this recent media attention into perspective. We do not want people to be excessively concerned about contact with other families and children at playgroup social isolation presents a serious health risk in many ways that are often underestimated. We know that there are many social interactions that families have that cannot be covered by this type of legislation: swimming pools, birthday parties playground and shopping to name a few.

Some people are not aware of playgroup, how it operates or the dependence on the hard work of local families in local communities. We hope that the recent media attention might help increase awareness of playgroup and the benefits it brings. Lastly, research by the Telethon Kids Institute has shown that playgroup families are more likely to access appropriate health services than families that don't attend playgroup.