



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 29th January, 2020

Playgroups Delivering Benefits for Buloke Families

Mallee Family Care (MFC) playgroups in Sea Lake, Donald and Wycheproof are back in full swing this week and MFC General Manager for Education, Ms. Chris Forbes, is encouraging families with young children to attend, with the benefits of the playgroups proving to reach far beyond early childhood.

“Playgroup is more than just playing; it lays the foundation for a child’s physical, emotional and social development, assisting in their educational and life outcomes.

“Our Buloke Shire playgroups have a significant role in the community and in the lives of the young families who are involved.”

Ms. Forbes says that the relationship between parents, carers and children is critical in supporting a child’s language, literacy and play.

The playgroup model provided by Mallee Family Care includes a qualified educator and social worker and the activities, which are co-designed by parents, include music, craft, story-time, snack and inside and outside play.

The playgroup also offers parents an opportunity to connect with each other and expand their friendship circles.

Ms. Forbes says that having both an educator and social worker available gives parents the chance to discuss issues about their child’s development and to raise any other concerns they might have.

“Our families are providing us with direct feedback which allows us to measure impacts attending the playgroup has on the children and more broadly, on their families.

“Research is highlighting the positive benefits of attending playgroups and MFC has developed an *Outcomes Framework*, outlining the results we expect to achieve for families attending playgroups.

“We measure impacts and improvements and share the results with parents and carers. The results are also used to guide and improve our early years work,” Ms. Forbes explains.

Highlights from the 2018/2019 research include:

- 80 to 83% of parents recorded an increase in ‘parental confidence and capacity’
- 83% of parents recorded an increase in their connection to community through greater participation in community and networks



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- Most significant across the playgroups was a drop in vulnerability around child development and school readiness, when compared to the first collection of data.

Ms. Forbes says the results show that children who attend the playgroup will be better prepared for their lifelong journey of education.

Anyone wanting to join a MFC playgroup in Wycheproof, Donald or Sea Lake can contact Wendy Hersey on 0488 110 989.

New families are welcome.

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