



**EC LINC R2A
Birth to Three Best
Practices: Playgroups**

Survey of
Current Practices

August, 2016

Prepared by

Collective Impact, LLC

Survey of Current Practices

Collective Impact completed a survey of current playgroup practices with EC LINC R2A partners in September of 2016. This document summarizes the responses received from twelve respondents. Since the partners may run several different types of playgroups, more than one response per question may appear. In addition, respondents did not supply responses to every question, as the question may not have been applicable to their services.

1. Playgroup Target Population

Target Population	Number of Playgroups Serving the Population
No target population, serve all interested families	4
Homeless Families	2
New Families in the Community	3
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families	6
Families of Children with Special Needs	4
First Time Parents	2
Teen Parents	2
Parents at Risk for Child Protective Services Intervention	1
Parents Receiving Services from Child Protective Services	0
Parents Experiencing Mental Health Issues	2
Parents with Substance Abuse Issues	0
Families Experiencing Poverty	7
Other: Families with infants age 6 weeks to 1 year old	1
Other: Parents of children not in licensed child care or preschool	2

The majority of respondents replied that their playgroups targeted several demographics at once, primarily culturally and linguistically diverse families who are also experiencing poverty.

2. Parent Recruitment

Recruitment Method	Response
Referrals from other agencies or programs	10
Community outreach activities	10
Community Bulletin Boards	8
Personal Invitation from the agency	8
Word of mouth	6
Websites/Social Media	3
Public Service Announcements	1
Recreation guide	1

Respondents reported using a variety of methods to recruit families to the playgroup. The most common methods are community outreach and referrals from other programs. Others report the use of personal invitations and word of mouth.

3. Intake Procedures and Data Collection

Procedure	Responses
Intake Appointment	4
Intake Form Only	2
Registration Process	4
Ages and Stages Questionnaire	5
No intake or registration, parents can drop in	1

Only one respondent stated that they did not collect initial demographic information on families, and allowed parents to drop in at any time. All other respondents report collecting demographic information and some report using this opportunity to collect preservice data on families in the programs. Other respondents reported assessing the developmental needs of children at intake, as well.

4. Intake and Ongoing Parent Engagement

Every respondent has practices in place to refer families to other services in the community, including health services, family economic supports, and culturally relevant services. Many respondents reported partnering with Help Me Grow, local Family Resource Centers, and mental health providers to supply parents with a full range of supports.

5. Evaluation - Assessing Parent Satisfaction with Services

Process	Responses
Parent Satisfaction Survey	9
End of Year Focus Group	1
Informal Parent Feedback	1
In Development Process for Parent Survey	1
No Process in Place	1

The majority of respondents stated that they used at least one method for assessing parent satisfaction with playgroup services, with two respondents using more than one method. Only one respondent stated that they were not currently using any tools to assess parent satisfaction.

6. Evaluation – Measuring Change for Families at Service Termination

Practice	Responses
Post Service Parent Survey	4
Pre and Post Parent Surveys	4
Review of Child Development Plans	2
Children’s Feedback Council	1
No Measurement Practices in Place	1

Most respondents use a tool to measure change with families, generally in the form of parent surveys. Three agencies reported using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to assess developmental change in children. Only one agency reported that they were not currently using any tools to assess change. One agency reported obtaining program feedback from children enrolled in the service.

7. Evaluation – Measuring Change for Families Post Service

Practice	Responses
Conduct Home Visits/Individual Service Plans	1
Transition Assistance	3
Informal Follow Up	2
In Process of Developing Follow Up Procedures	1
No Follow Up	6

Most agencies do not report performing any follow up activities with families who have aged-out or left playgroup services, although some did report informal follow up through parent drop ins.

8. Playgroup Frequency:

Playgroup Meeting Frequency	Responses
Daily	1
Once per Week	11
Twice per Week	3
Three Times per Week	2
Twice per Month	1

The majority of playgroups meet one day per week.

9. Playgroup Session Length:

Playgroup Session Length	Responses
One Hour	4
One and a Half Hours	2
Two Hours	8
Two and a Half Hours	2
Three Hours	1

The majority of playgroups meet for two hours per session.

10. Playgroup Session, Program Length.

Playgroup Program Length	Responses
Year Round	2
School Year Only	3
40 Weeks (two semesters of 20 weeks each)	1
35 Weeks	1
10 Weeks	1
8-12 Weeks	2
No answer	2

Based on playgroup type, there was wide variation of the duration of the playgroup program length. Program length varied based on target population served and program aims. Programs aimed at integrating new families into the community are of shorter duration than those playgroups that target school readiness.

11. Playgroup Session Activities and Routines:

Only one respondent replied that playgroup session activities varied by session. All other respondents reported a typical playgroup routine of the following, with slight changes based on developmental age of the child: Free play, clean up, circle time, wash hands, reading time, art, outdoor play, and closing transition.

12. Playgroup Curriculum

Response	Does the Playgroup Use a Purchased Curriculum?	Did the Agency Create a Curriculum?
Yes	2	10
No	9	0
No Answer	1	2

Purchased Curriculum: Mother Goose on the Loose, <http://www.mgol.net/>
Creative Curriculum, <http://teachingstrategies.com/curriculum/>

If the agency created a curriculum, what resources were used to develop it?

Sources	Responses
Based on child interest, research topics online, books, or other curriculum resources	3
Partnered with Early Childhood Degreed Staff Person	2
Based on ASQ Child Results	2
Every Child Ready to Read Program	1
Creative Curriculum	2
California Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations and the California Preschool Learning Foundations	1
Circle of Security and Strengthening Families	1

Most respondents reported using a variety of sources to tailor a curriculum to suit the needs of the children and families in the group.

13. Playgroup Curriculum – Curriculum Goals

Curriculum Goals	Responses
Empower parents to facilitate child development and support children’s learning	6
Increase child knowledge, social emotional competence	4
Increase kindergarten readiness	3
Build social supports for parents	2
Increase and support parent-child bonding	1

Respondents most frequently reported that they chose and/or designed their curriculum to help parents facilitate their child’s development and to support the child’s early learning. Playgroups designed to connect parents to the community focused on building social supports for families.

14. Playgroup Waiting Lists

Five respondents reported that they did not maintain a waiting list for playgroup services as they had the capacity to serve all families who applied for services. Seven agencies reported maintaining waitlists for services. Reported waitlists were as low as one to five weeks, to as high as six to nine months

15. Playgroup Group Size

Participant	Average	Highest	Lowest
Facilitator	1	3	1
Aide	1	3	0
Parent	15	35	10
Child	15	25	10

The majority of respondents use just one facilitator per group, with three respondents using two facilitators per group, and one respondent using three facilitators per group. Two groups reported that they did not use aides with their playgroups. The maximum group size was thirty-five parents and children, but the most commonly reported group size was fifteen parents and children.

16. Playgroup Facilitator Practices and Characteristics

Practice	Response
Dedicated facilitator, parents do not share facilitator role	5
2 or More co-facilitators in conjunction with parent partner	4
1 Dedicated facilitator with parent assistant	4

Five respondents stated that the facilitator performed their function solely and that they did not share the role with parents. The other respondents using parents as assistants to help set up or cleanup before or after playgroup activities. A few respondents reported using parents to lead story time or singing activities.

Facilitator Background	Responses
Paraprofessional	7
Early Childhood Degree	9
Licensed Therapist	1
Teacher	7
Masters in Infant Mental Health	1
Educational Psychology	1
Librarian	1
Child Development Specialist	1

The majority of respondents reported that the facilitator possessed an early childhood degree. The second most commonly used facilitators were teachers and paraprofessionals.

17. Playgroup Venue – Site and Cost

Nine respondents stated that their playgroup venue was located on the program site. Three reported using a school based site. Three others reported using public space such as a public park or local library. One program reported using a recreation center. Eleven respondents stated that the venue was use at no cost due to using donated or public space. Four reported wholly owning the venue, and three playgroup sites reported renting the site, with rental cost ranging from \$750 per month to \$1900 per month.

18. Other Playgroup Costs

Expense	Average Expense	Highest Reported Expense	Lowest Reported Expense
Curriculum	\$92	\$83	\$00
Activity Consumables	\$119	\$417	\$6
Non-consumables	\$85	\$300	\$33
Food	\$31	\$250	\$0
Maintenance	\$150	\$800	\$0
Facilitator*	\$33,063	\$65,000	\$12,268
Aide*	\$9,393	\$25,000	\$0
Other Staff*	\$12,625	\$63,000	\$0
Other Costs	\$75	\$250	\$0
Venue Rent	\$1195	\$1900	\$750

*All expenses are calculated monthly except for salaries, which are displayed as an annual amount.

Expenses varied widely by respondent based on whether site space was donated or free versus renting or owning. Staff salaries also varied significantly between programs. Only one program reported food as an expense, which skewed the average. Still other respondents reported using volunteers as playgroup aides, further reducing costs.

19. Funding Sources

Source	Responses
Foundation Funding	6
Local or State Led Initiatives	5
Parent Fees	3
Local Department of Education	2
State Department of Education	1
Birth to Three/Early Intervention Funds	1
Federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants	1
Donations	1
Unspecified Grants	1

The majority of respondents report using foundation funding to support their playgroups, followed closely by local or state led initiatives. While parent fees were mentioned as a source of income for three respondents, the respondents noted that fees made up a very small portion of the income and were frequently charged on a sliding fee scale.