



times
A C A D E M Y

Times Academy Playgroup Newsletter

Thank you for coming to see us this term and spending time with our students, trainers and having fun with your children. We feel privileged to lead such a wonderful playgroup and have the opportunity of ensuring that each child attending playgroup has access to a fun and educational place to learn.

Playgroup is an informal session where mums, dads, grandparents, children and babies enjoy the relaxed environment, meeting new children and adults. It is a wonderful opportunity for children to engage in activities and experiences, such as painting, playdough, craft, construction, stories, songs, music and physical play, before attending formal early education at long day care centres, preschool or school. It's really a fun time to play and learn.

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Thank you for attending playgroup over the past 6 weeks. This term in class our students have been learning about supporting inclusion and diversity and researching important information about Australia's First Nations People. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is embedded in our Early Years Learning Framework, and therefore every early childhood centre in Australia guides our youngest children to understand and respect our indigenous culture.

Cultural inclusion is reflected in playgroup by our students setting up the playgroup environment with cultural resources, toys, posters, pictures, dolls, puzzles etc. In our program we try to include many cultural events throughout the year, as well as implement activities and experiences that emulate the cultures of the children families and students. At group-time we encourage our students to sing in their home language, which also develops their confidence for when they complete work placement.

This term the children have been very interested in constructing with mega blocks, our train set and with our new magnetic set. Like every term, the green playdough activities have been very successful, as well as our music corner, bakery shop, cars, Pepper Pig medical set and parachute games. The children have learned many new skills and extended their knowledge this term including information about eating healthy foods during National Nutrition

week, making fairy biscuits for National Children's Week, matched numbers and colours with our new maths resources, and celebrated Halloween and Christmas. Group time is always popular, with stories / songs including the Wheels on the Bus, If you're happy and you know it, Open shut them, 5 Cheeky monkeys, and for week 6, many of our favourite Christmas songs. Please let us know if your child has a favourite song they like to sing – we will try to add it to our singing list. Please enjoy some photos taken from our weekly playgroup and playgroup book put together each week by the students. Remember to take a look when you are playgroup and feel free to add comments or suggestions.

Our playgroups will recommence on Monday 15th January and Thursday 18th January, 2024. Term 1 will run for 6 weeks. The Times Education design team will open the online booking system about 1-2 weeks prior to the start date. If you book in to a session please ensure you attend playgroup or email childcare@times.edu.au prior to the day if you are unable to make it. This allows other families on the waiting list to attend.

Feedback form – thank you for completing the feedback form at playgroup. It is vital for our quality improvement and to gives valuable feedback to our students and coordinators. If you would like to request a particular activity or celebration, please let the playgroup coordinator know.

Google and Social Media reviews – as a big favour to Times Academy please can you give us a few minutes of your time to complete a review on Google and on our social media pages – see below:



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Screen time and digital technology use for children 2-5 years: tips for balance

Screen time and digital technology use for preschoolers: part of a healthy lifestyle

Screen time and digital technology use can be part of a healthy lifestyle when they're balanced with other activities that are good for your child's development. These activities include physical and outdoor play, creative play, reading and socialising. Getting the right balance also includes making sure screen time doesn't interfere with sleep.

Our tips can help you encourage your child to use digital technology in balanced and healthy ways.

1. Make rules about screen time and digital technology use

You can help your child balance screen time and digital technology use with other activities. One of the best ways to do this is by working together on family rules or a family media plan.

Your family's rules might cover:

- where your child can use digital technology – for example, only in family rooms and not in bedrooms or the car
- when your child can use digital technology – for example, mealtimes are free of TV, computers and phones, or no screens in the hour before bedtime
- how your child can use digital technology – for example, to play a dance competition game or a puzzle app, but not to watch YouTube.

It's OK if your rules include time limits to help your child balance screen time with other things like physical activity. For example, it might help to know that Australian physical activity guidelines say preschoolers should be active for at least 3 hours a day.

2. Aim for short screen time sessions

When your child is using digital technology, it's good for your child to have short screen time sessions and take regular breaks. Getting up and moving around is important for your child's energy levels, development, sleep, and overall health and wellbeing.

You can do this by encouraging your child to:

- use a timer to set breaks from screen time
- do something active when the timer ends, like play outside
- make use of natural breaks in screen time – for example, see who can do the most star jumps during the ad break.



3. Get your child moving, especially outside

It's a good idea to encourage your child to play outside several times a day.

At this age, outdoor play can include:

- playing games of chasey, hide-and-seek or kick-to-kick
- crawling through tunnels or climbing over fallen trees
- building a castle out of boxes, clothes baskets, outdoor play equipment or furniture.

Physical activity for young children and active play for preschoolers can happen indoors too. It can be simple things like dancing, catching and throwing soft balls, or rolling along the floor or ground.



4. Imagine and create

Creative activities like telling stories, dressing up or drawing are good for your child's development. Activities like these help your child learn how to experiment, think and solve problems.

5. Encourage play and friendship with others

When children play face to face with others, they develop important life skills. These include getting along with other people, sharing and taking turns, being independent, and learning how to sort out conflicts and problems.

You can encourage preschooler friendships by arranging playdates with other children. Playgroups can also give your child the opportunity to learn how to play with other children.



6. Avoid screen time and digital technology use before bed

Preschoolers need plenty of sleep – 10-13 hours a night.

Screen time and digital technology use before bed can affect how quickly your child falls asleep. If your child avoids phones, tablets, computer screens or TV in the hour before bed, your child is likely to get to sleep more quickly.

7. Keep digital technology out of bedrooms at night

If you keep mobile phones and other devices out of your child's bedroom at night, your child won't be able to play games after lights out. This can also stop your child being disturbed in the night by messages and notifications.



When you help your child choose good-quality apps, games, TV and YouTube as well as balancing screen time, your child will learn to make good choices about using free time when they're older

One of the duties of an early childhood centre is to help and support families in their parenting role. Original information is from the [Raising Children website](#)

Let us know if there is a particular topic you would like included in the next newsletter.



What's on

in Sydney for children and families



Jurassic World: The Exhibition

1 Showground Road, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127
Every day, 10am to 8pm
22 September - 3 December 2023



Christmas at David Jones

86-108 Castlereagh St Sydney NSW 2000
Mon - Wed & Fri, 9:30am - 7pm ; Thu, 9:30am - 9pm
Sat, 9am - 7pm ; Sun, 10am - 7pm
4 November - 22 December 2023



Darling Harbour

Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW 2000
Every day, all day
20 November - 25 December 2023



Queen Victoria Building

455 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Experience the magic of Christmas with a unique and exciting new music program. High Tea With Santa within the centre this holiday season.

We look forward to seeing you in Term 1 2024.