



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Families and Social Services

## **THE HON SARAH HENDERSON MP**

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services

### **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Morrison Government boosts funding for Playgroup Australia to support children with disability**

The Morrison Government today announced over \$1.3 million in funding for Playgroup Australia to continue delivering its PlayConnect Playgroups and Better Start Community Events programs.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher said the Coalition Government recognises the importance of early intervention in giving children the best chance of realising their potential.

“Access to best-practice early childhood programs, such as PlayConnect Playgroups, is vital for children with developmental delay or disability,” Mr Fletcher said.

“PlayConnect Playgroups provide play experiences that are responsive to the needs of children aged 0-6 with autism or autism-like symptoms and provide an environment of peer-support for families

“Around 42 PlayConnect Playgroups around Australia help hundreds of children with disability participate in their communities and access the same choices, opportunities and experiences as other children.

“The PlayConnect Playgroups program will receive funding of \$1.125 million to continue this important service.

“By investing in children before they reach school age, we are helping to maximise their opportunities in education, the community and in work, later in life,” Mr Fletcher said.

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson said that Playgroup Australia will also receive \$200,000 to continue Better Start Community Events.

“These events are held across the country, including in regional, rural and remote areas to promote the benefits of playgroups for children and to help parents connect with local support services, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme,” Ms Henderson said.

“Extending funding for these programs gives families certainty and continuity while these supports continue to be integrated into the NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) gateway and the new Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) investment strategy.”

This funding builds on the Government’s ongoing investment in Playgroup Australia.

Between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2018, the Department of Social Services provided Playgroup Australia over \$24 million in funding, with a further \$11 million committed until 30 June 2020. This includes around \$4.7 million per year for five years to act as a peak body for community playgroups, under the Children and Parenting Support (CaPS) activity.

Playgroup Australia also received a \$1.3 million ILC Grant from the National Disability Insurance Agency in 2017, and \$185,000 to develop a national Community Playgroup Disability Information and Referral Framework.

**ENDS**

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