

Adapting the Playgroup model for young children who have a sensory disability



Royal Institute for
Deaf and Blind Children

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC)



Royal Institute for
Deaf and Blind Children

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- RIDBC so Australia's oldest and largest independent special educator and has been in operation since 1866.
 - RIDBC provides a wide range of innovative educational services to children who have a significant hearing and /or vision impairment.
 - Some children have additional disabilities



Sue Benzie

- Manager: Early Childhood Services (Hearing Impairment)



RIDBC Early Childhood Services (Hearing Impairment)

- Early Learning Programs
- Preschools
- Resource Team
- “Package” offered to families on the Early Learning Programs includes a weekly individual session with the child and parent/caregiver and a weekly Early Learning Group
- Offsite programs



Playgroups NSW Vision

- What We Do
7 points
- What We Value
5 points

Shared values

Confident and positive parenting

Acceptance of difference and the encouragement of diversity

Positive interactions between children and adults

Volunteering and mutual support

Welcoming learning environments for all



Play

- Little difference between the underpinnings of community playgroups and RIDBC ECS (HI) Early learning Groups



Early Learning Groups

small numbers

family members welcome

activities planned to support each child's individual program to extend learning and offer additional opportunities for practice. The individual program is based on the parent's hopes and aspirations for their child



Generalise

- In these contexts children have opportunities to generalise learning and develop their communication in the company of their peers across many contexts.
- Provide appropriate scaffolding
- Model strategies



Routine

- Free choice activities
- Structured activities
- Snack time
- Group language time (rhymes, stories)
- Music activities
- Parent Education, Evaluation and Planning



Communication

With and between families

With and between staff



Added Support

- Parent education
- Resource Team
- Social activities



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- PING
 - CAPS
 - ELG
 - “.....” Group



Challenges and Rewards



Challenges

- Fluctuating attendance
- Resource intensive
- Interpreters



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- Purpose built environment
 - Easy access to specialist staff
 - Toy and Resource Library
 - A sense of belonging

