



Playgroup Manual

Revised: August 13, 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Background	3
Playgroup's Vision	3
Playgroup's Mission	3
A Short History of Mount Pleasant Playgroup	3
Playgroup's Organizational Structure	4
Details	5
General Overview of Playgroup	5
Community Association Membership	5
Playgroup Registration	5
WHO	5
Caregivers/Nannies	6
Dayhome Providers	6
WHEN	6
WHERE	6
COST	7
Pro-rating	7
Financial Assistance	7
Refunds	7
Refund Details	8
VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS	8
Volunteer Positions Manual	9
Protocol for no-show volunteers (Parties/Toy Cleans Only)	9
Playgroup Guidelines	10
Footwear	10
Snack	10
Doors	10
Lost & Found	10
Emergency Exit Procedure	11
Health Policy	11
Prevention	11
Illness	11
Outbreak Management	12

Code of Conduct Policy	12
Discipline Policy	13
Expenditures Policy	14
Finances Policy	15

This document contains comprehensive information about Mount Pleasant Playgroup.

Background

Playgroup's Vision

Enriching and Inclusive Connections for Parents and Kids.

Playgroup's Mission

Playgroup's mission is to provide a pleasant, supportive environment in which parents /caregivers and children can gather socially in an informal setting.

This parent run cooperative thrives on the voluntary participation of our member families.

A Short History of Mount Pleasant Playgroup

The Mount Pleasant Playgroup was started in the Fall of 1981. Marilyn Witwer and Suzanne McGillis felt there was a need for a pre-school Playgroup within the community and had gathered together a number of interested people by advertising in the North and South side "Mirror" and in various stores around the area.

Rent-free space was negotiated with the (then) West Mount Pleasant Community Association and the group began to meet weekly in the basement of the Community hall. As with any newly formed group there were "teething troubles". The basement was dirty. There was no financing system in place. There was a problem of "nutritional" snacks versus "other" snacks for the children. There was also a high turnover of members.

Along the way, the basement was painted, systems and formats were adopted, various rules and regulations were agreed upon and the foundation of Playgroup as we know it was established.

The basement of the community hall has undergone many changes in the last thirty-eight years. It is now a very bright and pleasant place to meet. Playgroup is constantly evolving and improving. New people add new ideas. New children mean lots of fun. Today Playgroup operates autonomously under the Mount Pleasant Community Association, five days a week and has over 100 spirited children.

Our thanks go to Marilyn and Suzanne for starting Playgroup and to all those who have, since then, contributed so much time and effort to make Playgroup a success.

Playgroup's Organizational Structure

Overall responsibility for Playgroup's operation falls to the Playgroup Executive. An executive is elected annually. Election of these positions is dependent upon the number of Playgroup members willing to assume them. A simple ballot system will be used in the event of several members wishing to accept a position in any one year; otherwise a nomination system is used. Our mentor system and strong records enable the past executive to assist the new executive, in order to facilitate a smooth transition.

Playgroup meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of the Month, September through June inclusive; 8pm at the lower hall unless otherwise stated. Discussions revolve around Playgroup activities, events, maintenance and finances.

All Playgroup members are welcome to attend the board meetings. Please email the Playgroup Chair (playgroup@mpca.ca) prior to the meeting to let them know about your planned attendance and they will confirm the date/time/location.

A copy of the minutes of each meeting will be distributed to meeting attendees after each meeting (via Google Sharing Docs) and can be made available to the membership if requested. Additional Executive meetings are scheduled as required.

All executive members are expected to attend Playgroup meetings. The positions of the board are:

- ☐ Chairperson,
- ☐ Vice-Chair,
- ☐ Registrar,
- ☐ Communications Coordinator,
- ☐ Party Coordinator,
- ☐ Treasurer,
- ☐ Secretary,
- ☐ Volunteer Coordinator,
- ☐ Purchaser and
- ☐ Toy Coordinator.
- ☐ Space Improvement Coordinator

Please see the [Playgroup Volunteer Positions Manual](#) for a description of these volunteer positions.

Details

General Overview of Playgroup

Playgroup membership is open to all families with preschool aged children from newborn to about 5 years old. Our group is organized on a voluntary cooperative basis with members sharing in the responsibility for snacks, activities, and maintenance. This enables us to keep enrollment costs to a minimum while still providing a large selection of quality toys, structures, books and activities for the children and also providing low cost enrichment for the parents. The voluntary parent involvement also encourages new ideas and innovations so that the grass-roots nature of Playgroup is preserved. It is unrealistic to expect that responsibility and work will be borne equally by all members at all times. As in any organization, individuals will donate time, talent and resources as and when they are able and accordingly, parents are offered a large selection of volunteer positions.

Each Playgroup day offers Free Play, Craft, Snack and Circle Time, with Circle Time participation varying according to member participation. A sign-up for snack duty is posted and members are asked to volunteer to bring snack on specific day(s).

Please see the [A Day At Playgroup](#) document for more details.

Community Association Membership

Each family registering in Playgroup must purchase an annual Mount Pleasant Community Association membership (\$15 for Mount Pleasant residents or \$25 for non- community residents).

Members bringing children other than their own must ensure that the children's families also purchase a community membership. Memberships are available on the Mount Pleasant Community Association website at <http://www.mpca.ca>. This membership provides liability insurance to playgroup members as well many other community benefits.

Playgroup Registration

WHO

Playgroup is for children 5 years old and under. No older children are permitted to attend Playgroup even on Professional Development days due to safety concerns.

On any given day, the maximum child quota is limited to 25 children. Once the maximum child quota is reached families will be placed on a wait list. Of note: the maximum fire capacity for the Lower Hall is 138 people and 215 people for the Upper

Hall.

Caregivers/Nannies

If a caregiver is bringing multiple children from different families, each child's parent needs to register their child separately. Because Playgroup is run on a volunteer basis, it is expected that each child's parent should fulfil a specific volunteering role as well as sign up to provide children/adult snacks.

If a caregiver is bringing their own child along with other children they are supervising, the caregiver should register their own child. The other children's parents should register their own child(ren).

Note: a family is defined as a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household.

Dayhome Providers

Dayhome Providers are permitted to register and bring up to four children. It is up to the discretion of the Playgroup Board to allow more than four children as requested by a Dayhome Provider.

WHEN

The Playgroup year consists of two sessions.

- ☐ The first session runs from the beginning of September to mid-January.
- ☐ The second session commences at the end of January and wraps up mid-June with the Year End party.

Programs are held weekday mornings from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. This two-hour time limit should be kept in mind for all aspects of Playgroup planning as we share our space with the Pleasant Heights before and After School group (PHAS).

We are closed the week of Christmas break and the Separate Schools Spring Break (as PHAS follows this schedule). For specific dates please refer to our [calendar](#) on the mpca.ca website.

WHERE

Mount Pleasant Community Lower Hall (602 22 Ave NW, Calgary, AB)

COST

The cost to become a Playgroup member is the Playgroup Session Fee per family (\$40 per session per day)

Example: 2 kids on 2 days for Fall Session = \$80.00

Example: 3 kids on 2 days for Fall Session = \$80.00

Example: 2 kids on 3 days for Fall Session = \$120.00

For multiple kids from different families please see the Caregivers/Nannies section under WHO

plus the once yearly Mount Pleasant Community Association (MPCA) fee (\$15.00 for Mount Pleasant residents and \$25.00 for non-community residents). Payment of both can be made online through the mpca.ca website.

Playgroup is a non-profit group funded by the registration fees. We make an effort to keep playgroup fees low to ensure accessibility to all community members.

Cheques

Playgroup Registrants can choose to pay by cheque. If paying by cheque, payment must be received within 7 days of registration, otherwise the registrant will be put on a waiting list (unless other arrangements have been discussed with the Board Registrar and Treasurer).

Please make cheque payable to: Mount Pleasant Playgroup, mail cheque to: 602 22 Ave NW Calgary, Alberta, T2M 1N7 and email the Treasurer (mpp.treasurer@mpca.ca) and Registrar (mpp.registrar@mpca.ca) who will add you to the system.

Please also include the names of the children attending Playgroup on the cheque.

Please also send a cheque to the MPCA Association with cheque payable to: Mount Pleasant Community Association and mail cheque to: 602 22 Ave NW Calgary, Alberta, T2M 1N7.

Pro-rating

There is no pro-rating for late registrations. Registration can be done online or cheques can be made payable to: Mount Pleasant Playgroup (see above).

Financial Assistance

We are an inclusive community and welcome all families. Any member experiencing

financial difficulty should advise the Playgroup Chair (playgroup@mpca.ca) to discuss alternatives/assistance to support the family. Session fees can be refunded, unfortunately, the MPCA fees cannot be waived or refunded.

Refunds

The cut-off day for refunds is 2 weeks from the starting day of Playgroup. For Example:

- ☐ Fall session (Sept-Jan) if start date is Sept 6, refund cut-off is Sept 20;
- ☐ Winter session (Feb-Jun) if start date is Jan 31, refund cut-off is Feb 14.

Because registration is ongoing, this cut-off day applies to all registrations made throughout the year, both before and after the cut-off. No exceptions.

Refund Details

If a person withdraws before the cut-off date in a given session, the impact on fees is as follows:

- ☐ A full refund of the session fee,
- ☐ Volunteer commitment will be cancelled.
- ☐ No refund of the Mount Pleasant Community Association Fee.

If a person withdraws after the cut-off date in a given session, the impact on fees is:

- ☐ No refund will be given on their session fee
- ☐ Volunteer commitment will be cancelled.
- ☐ No refund of the Mount Pleasant Community Association Fee.

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS

Playgroup could not exist without our members' volunteer time. The volunteer commitments are Daily Volunteer Duties plus a Volunteer Position.

Daily Volunteer Duties include:

- ☐ Help with daily clean-up (wiping down children's tables, sweeping, washing dishes, etc.)
- ☐ Putting toys away at the end of the day
- ☐ Signing up for a snack day

Volunteer Positions include:

- ❑ Executive Board positions,
- ❑ Keyholders,
- ❑ Weekly Positions (ie. milk purchaser, laundry),
- ❑ Periodic Positions (ie. toy cleaning, handyperson, costume mending),
- ❑ Parties (ie. Halloween, Christmas, Year End).

A Volunteer Position commitment is required by each member for each day they are registered, per family (not for each child), per session (please note: Fall and Winter are two sessions).

Example 1. Member with one child attending Mondays and Fridays would need to commit to two volunteer duties (a volunteer commitment per registered day). Members can explore different volunteering options per session.

Example 2. Member with two children attending Mondays with a Nanny and the Nanny's own child will have to commit to two volunteer duties because the Member and the Nanny are separate families.

Sign-up for volunteer positions happens upon enrollment and is coordinated by our Volunteer Coordinator. All volunteering duties will be reviewed by the Volunteer Coordinator.

If a Member cannot fulfil their volunteer role, please email the Volunteer Coordinator (mpp.volunteer@mpca.ca) to discuss forwarding your volunteer time to the next party/toy clean or switching to a different role. The decision to forward or switch roles is based on the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator. Please also see below for the Protocol for no-show volunteers.

Volunteer Positions Manual

Please refer to our [Volunteer Positions Manual](#) for more information.

Protocol for no-show volunteers (Parties/Toy Cleans Only)

1. Members will receive notice (email and if necessary phone) from Party/Toy Coordinator stating volunteer duties have been forwarded to the next party/toy clean. The Volunteer Coordinator will be given notice that the Member has not completed their party/toy clean duty and has been requested to complete the next one in lieu, so the Volunteer Coordinator can adjust their records. The Volunteer Coordinator may also discuss other volunteer roles that the Member could switch to.
2. The Treasurer will be given notice that the Member has not completed their party/toy clean duty and has been requested to complete the next one in

lieu, so the Treasurer can request a post-dated cheque (\$50.00 per session) to hold (written to the date of when the next party/toy clean should be fulfilled), in the event volunteer duties are not fulfilled.

3. If the next party/toy clean is not fulfilled then Members will again receive notice from the Party/Toy Coordinator stating volunteer duties have been forwarded to the next party/toy clean. The Volunteer Coordinator will again be given notice. Members have 2 opportunities per term to complete their toy clean duty and 2 opportunities in the fall term and 1 opportunity in the winter term to complete their party duty.
4. If the Member does not fulfill any volunteer duties by the end of the year, the post-dated cheque will be cashed. If no cheque has been submitted, then the Member's account will be invoiced, and future registration for anything related to a Mount Pleasant Association Fee membership will not be possible until the fee is paid.

Playgroup Guidelines

Footwear

Outdoor footwear should be removed in the entry and is not permitted in the playgroup rooms. Children should wear indoor shoes or socks.

Snack

Signing up and bringing snacks for children and adults is mandatory per family except for Keyholders. Caregivers with multiple children from different families should sign up for a snack day per child's family. When signing up for a snack, bring enough snacks for the registered amount of children (ie. if the session is full, 25 snacks is needed) and adults. Please wash hands before preparing and dispensing snacks.

Children should remain seated for snack time.

Due to allergies, and the fact that we share the space with an after-school program, the playgroup space is a nut-free zone. We avoid the use of peanuts and all other nuts in the children's' snack and the adults' snack. Please be sure to read the ingredients on all snacks you bring in to ensure that they do not contain even traces of peanuts or other nuts.

If there is an insufficient number of people signed up, for snack, the keyholder for that particular day should ask for snack volunteers, or communicate with the

Communications Board member via email or Board member present on that day to allocate snack duties.

Doors

The entry doors should remain closed at all times. For their own safety, children are not allowed in the mudroom or supply closet without adult supervision.

Lost & Found

The items in the lost and found bin located in the mudroom of the lower hall gets donated at the end of each calendar month. Please ensure to look for lost items as soon as you find it missing.

If something was lost outside of the Hall, we have a great network of savvy community members and are able to use social media to make a call out to look for an item. Please email MPCA Communications, communications@mpca.ca , to reach out.

Slide

Rules for the slide:

1. One person on the slide at a time, no pushing.
2. No toys down the slide please.
3. Only slide down when the bottom of the slide has been cleared of children.
4. No playing on the outside of the structure (for example on top of the tube).

Emergency Exit Procedure

Members should familiarize themselves with the location and operation of the fire extinguishers, alarms, and know all exits from the building.

The emergency exit plan is to follow the lit emergency exit signs and lights (two exits, one at the entrance to the Lower Hall and the other one is in the playroom southwest corner). The emergency exit signs and lights are battery operated. Fire extinguishers are located in the dining area beside the mudroom door as well as at the bottom of the stairs of the Lower Hall entrance. Fire alarm pull stations are located at the playroom southwest exit and at the bottom of the stairs of the Lower Hall entrance.

In the event of a fire, collect your OWN child/ren and exit by the safest route. If it is necessary to take someone else's child, be sure to inform that parent that you have done so, thus avoiding the risk of the parent remaining in the building searching frantically for his/her child when the child is already safely outside.

Health Policy

Prevention

1. Handwashing is one of the best way to prevent the spread of infections. Hand Wash after toileting, before eating and after sneezing. Hand Wash before preparing the snacks.
2. Cleaning dishes
 - a. Wash with detergent and warm water
 - b. Rinse detergent away with clean, warm water
 - c. Submerge in a sink for 2 minutes with 2 tablespoons of household bleach per domestic sink half-filled with water.

Reference: AHS Health and Safety Guidelines for Child Care Facilities, April 2017.

Retrieved from

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-health-safety-guidlines-child-care-facilities.pdf>

3. Toy Cleans: see the [Volunteer Positions Manual](#)
4. Vaccines: Mount Pleasant Playgroup encourages all eligible children to receive vaccines as per Alberta Health Services guidelines. Playgroup welcomes many newborns who are vulnerable to diseases because they are not old enough to have received their vaccines. Immunization directly protects individuals who receive vaccines. Through community (or herd)immunity, immunization against many diseases also prevents the spread of infection in the community and indirectly protects:
 - newborns who have not yet received all of their vaccines
 - people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, such as people who had an organ transplant or are undergoing treatment for cancer or other illnesses

Please see the [Alberta Health Services Immunization Program Standards Manual](#) which has links to the Government of Canada Immunization Guide for vaccine information, schedules and common adverse reactions to vaccines.

Illness

Inform a board member and fellow playgroup members if your child has vomiting, diarrhea, fever over 37.8 degrees C, head lice or pink eye. Stay home until your child has been symptom free for 24 hours.

Inform a board member and fellow playgroup members if your child has a severe communicable disease such as Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Tuberculosis, Varicella (Chicken Pox). Your doctor will let you know when your child is no longer contagious and can return to Playgroup.

Reference: BC Centre for Disease Control (2009). A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Illnesses. Retrieved from [hwww.bccdc.ca/resourcegallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/Other/Epid_GF_childhood_quickguide_may_09.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resourcegallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/Other/Epid_GF_childhood_quickguide_may_09.pdf)

Outbreak Management

An outbreak may be suspected in a child care facility when there are two or more children with the same category of symptoms that started within 48 hours of one another.

If an outbreak (through Playgroup Members' calling in their child's symptoms) is suspected with symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, nausea etc, it must be immediately reported to the GI Outbreak Response Lead at 403-943-2400.

If an outbreak is suspected with symptoms of fever, new cough, new rash illness or symptoms other than vomiting, nausea or diarrhea it must be reported to Communicable Disease Outbreak Response lead at 403-955-6750.

Reference: (AHS Environmental Public Health Calgary Zone 2018)

Code of Conduct Policy

It is the responsibility of each parent (or caregiver) to ensure their child(ren) behaves in a manner that allows for the safe enjoyment of Playgroup by all. The following outlines the type of behaviour that interferes with safe enjoyment of playgroup:

- ☐ A parent (caregiver) ignoring the behaviour or safety of their child(ren), thereby obligating other members to provide guidance, discipline, or comfort;
- ☐ Hitting, shouting or raising a voice in a threatening way; and,
- ☐ Singling out and humiliating a child.

We stress the practice of positive guidance and discipline that encourages the individuality and confidence of children. Parents (or caregivers) are expected to take an active role in guiding their child(ren) in a positive manner, while encouraging them to share equipment and toys, and to get along with others. We encourage parents (or caregivers) to:

- ☐ Be responsible for the behaviour and safety of their child(ren);
- ☐ Label the behaviour and not the child(ren), and in doing so, help them to learn self- control and accountability; and,
- ☐ Help the child(ren) to find solutions which are appropriate to the child(ren)'s age and stage of development.
- ☐ Some other helpful suggestions include:
- ☐ Never discuss a child when other children are present;
- ☐ Never discuss a child within his or her hearing;
- ☐ You are the model for the children. Your behaviour will be a great influence;
- ☐ Praise acceptable behaviour whenever possible;
- ☐ Always be aware of what the children are doing;
- ☐ Speak simply and quietly;
- ☐ Get down to the child's level when talking to him or her;

When giving directions:

1. Be sure you have the child's attention;
2. Emphasize the positive rather than the negative;
3. Give a choice of two things whenever possible;
4. Never plead, threaten or strike;
5. Encourage participation, don't force it; and,
6. Remember your manners.

Discipline Policy

If a child is behaving in an aggressive manner (i.e. deliberately hitting or biting another child), it is the responsibility of that child's parent or caregiver to

immediately remove the child from playgroup for the remainder of that day. It does not matter if the child has been at playgroup for 5 minutes or 90 minutes. The child may return to Playgroup the following week. Should the aggressive behaviour re-occur, the parent will be responsible to remove the child from Playgroup again.

If a child is repeatedly behaving in an aggressive manner as described above, and the Playgroup Board receives three written complaints about the child, the child will be asked to stay home from playgroup for a one month period. If the parent or caregiver needs further help with addressing behaviour challenges, they are encouraged to ask for help from a board member to direct them to appropriate resources.

If problems with aggressive behaviour still persist following a one month absence from playgroup, the Playgroup Board will reassess the situation at that time. Further recommendations for counseling may be made and/or the child may be requested to withdraw from playgroup for the remainder of the session for the safety of the other members.

Resources available to help with addressing behaviour challenges:

- ☐ Parenting Power
- ☐ Annie the Nanny
- ☐ Professional Parenting
- ☐ Raymond Parenting
- ☐ Families Matter

This is not an endorsement for the above resources, merely a suggestion of alternatives for parents to look into.

Expenditures Policy

Whenever possible, members' approved expenditures should be made from personal funds. Reimbursement will be made upon delivery of purchases and completion of a Reimbursement Form supported by an original receipt(s). Please email the Treasurer at mpp.treasurer@mpca.ca for more details.

Finances Policy

Playgroup is financed mainly by semi-annual membership fees. Additional income is raised by occasional fundraising projects. We accept some donations, such as food

and door prizes for the Christmas party as well as toys(that are new or barely used).

Playgroup funds will be used for Playgroup purposes only. Income received covers purchases of some basic repairs, equipment replacement, snacks, kitchen supplies, coffee and cream, toys, craft supplies, furnishings, cleaning, volunteer appreciation etc.

Outside of normal operations, other costs that are capital in nature (i.e. Electrical upgrade) or considered discretionary (i.e. Community Christmas party) will be prioritized and approved by the Board.

All monies collected and disbursed on behalf of Playgroup are documented by the Treasurer and all accounts are reconciled by the Treasurer monthly. Financial reports are available to any Playgroup member.

Should Playgroup cease to operate, all monies and assets would be assumed by the Mount Pleasant Community Association.