

Chapter 230 Playgroup Guidelines

Playgroups are not just for your kids! They are for you too! *Mothers & More* playgroups are a great way to get acquainted with other Members and their children. Playgroups can be a great source of enjoyment for both you and your child(ren).

The Playgroup Coordinator provides the overall structure for the playgroup program. She assigns Members to playgroups and handles any issues that may arise. The Playgroup Leader handles her playgroup's meeting schedule, and is the liaison between playgroup Members and the Playgroup Coordinator. The Playgroup Host provides the play place and the snacks, if the group decides to serve them. As a Member of playgroup, if at any time you feel uncomfortable with a situation, you are encouraged to speak to the person involved or the Playgroup Leader at the time, or as soon as possible. The best way to avoid a misunderstanding is to communicate openly with others.

The following are the guidelines for all the *Mothers & More* playgroups within a Chapter. They are intended to avoid misunderstandings between Members by stating in advance what is/isn't acceptable within the group. Members are expected to follow these guidelines:

- 1. Hosting** -- Playgroups held in a Members home are for *Members Only*.
All playgroup members are encouraged to host playgroup on a rotating basis. You can have a playgroup in your home, or in nice weather at a park, or in any location acceptable to your playgroup. However, in consideration of everyone's budgets, it is preferred that playgroups be held at locations for which there is no charge. Playgroups will be 2 hours long, unless the host specifies it will last longer.
- 2. RSVP** -- The host should know how many people will be attending playgroup. Please contact your host 24 hours in advance to let her know if you will attend.
- 3. Visitors** -- Playgroups held in a Member's home are for *Members Only*.
(Memberships must be current so that we do not violate any of Nationals guidelines.)
According to the National Mothers and More policy, women may not join a Mothers and More playgroup without first becoming a member. In keeping with this policy, visitors are furnished with the appropriate information about playgroups, but are not eligible to attend a playgroup until they have joined Mothers and More. Potential members will be invited to a monthly Open Playgroup.
If a babysitter is attending instead of the child's mother, the babysitter must be a member.
If a mother is babysitting other children, she is responsible for those children following the rules of the playgroup. She should also get permission from the other playgroup members before bringing them.

4. **Health** -- If your child has a contagious illness or a fever, please do not attend the playgroup. If you have already RSVP'd, then simply call or e-mail the host to let them know not to expect you. If you are hosting the playgroup, and either you or your child is ill, then please notify all members by sending an email or calling the people that have RSVP'd. If possible, suggest an alternate location. Please use your best judgment.
5. **Pets** -- All pets must be kept out of the play area. Although you may be comfortable with your pet's behavior, others may be afraid of or even allergic to your pet. This keeps both your guest and your pet safe from harm as well.
6. **Play Area** -- Safety is KEY. The host should make every effort to provide a safe, childproofed play area. The house must be reasonably childproofed for the age of the children in attendance, including but not limited to all weapons, chemicals, and medications being safely stored. As a host, tell arriving Moms the rules of your house by specifying what areas of the house are O.K. for playing, eating & drinking, diaper changing, etc. Inform Moms of any off-limit areas. Guests should respect these boundaries.
 - a. Swimming Pools MUST have a childproof enclosure.
 - b. If you have firearms, *PLEASE* make sure that they are locked up and inaccessible.
7. **Toys** -- Hosts should try to provide age appropriate toys or toys appropriate for the youngest child attending. If necessary, ask your guests to bring an age appropriate toy when they RSVP. Please try to put away toys that would be inappropriate for the younger children at playgroup, specifically those that would present a choking hazard.
8. **Smoking** -- There is no smoking allowed at any playgroup.
9. **Conduct** -- Playgroups are a great opportunity for children to learn social skills. It is an ideal time for them to interact with other children, since you are present to encourage them and also to model appropriate behavior. Conduct, which hurts another person, either physically or verbally, will not be tolerated.
10. **Discipline** -- Remember that we as Mothers are responsible for our own children. Please watch your child constantly. Aggressive behavior from children will not be tolerated. If you see aggressive tendencies in your child in a social situation you must take immediate action.

If one child's mom doesn't notice her child's misbehavior, other moms should step-in before a child does something dangerous or hurts himself or others. In case of any "battles" or errant behavior, the observing Mother should stop it on the spot. Depending on the seriousness, the child's Mother should be made aware of the situation.

Problems that arise during playgroup should be discussed and handled immediately within the group. As a last resort, if a problem cannot be solved, please make the playgroup coordinator and the co-leaders aware of the situation.

Though it may be difficult, please respect each mother's method of discipline.

11. **Snacks** -- Snacks are not mandatory at a playgroup. Each playgroup should agree on whether snacks will be provided to the group on a rotating basis or whether each child will bring her own snack. Regardless of the policy, please be respectful of other children's allergies and/or food restrictions.
12. **Clean Up** -- Remember to respect the time period set by your host, she may have plans for later in the day. Groups with older children generally leave 15 minutes at the end of playgroup for a joint cleanup effort. Groups with infants and younger kids usually leave the cleanup for the host.
13. **Alternate Locations** --The host must choose a location to use as an alternate in the event of a cancellation due to illness or bad weather. This can be at someone else's house, a mall with a playground, library or any free place you can think of.
14. **Siblings** -- Please check with the hostess if you are allowed to bring younger/older siblings to a playgroup.