

So you you want to start a toddler group?



some useful questions ...



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This leaflet is designed to help you with planning and discussions when starting a toddler group.

There is a list of questions to ask yourselves as leaders, and those who will be involved, to help you think about all aspects of running a toddler group.

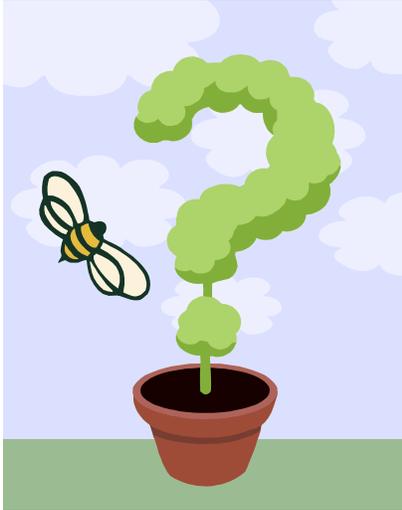
You do not have to answer all the questions in one go. Use them as a guide to help you think and discuss your groups needs.

Why?

Why do you want to open a group?

Is there a need?

What else is nearby?



Aims and Objectives

What is the aim of the group?

Who is it for?

What ages of children?

Will there be a limit?

What will the children/carers gain?

Do you have the support of your church leadership.?

- Do they share your vision?

Finance and Administration

Do you need a start up grant or alternative funding?

Will the church leadership fund it?

How much will you charge, and will it be per child or per family or group?

Who will be responsible for monies, the church Treasurer or the group?

Will you need an annual set of accounts?

Who will be responsible for other administrative tasks?

- Writing and maintaining an inventory
- Writing and maintaining a welcome sheet or leaflet
- Notices and distribution of information
- Initial registration of each child's personal information and needs and maintenance of records
- A record of any special or medical needs and communicate this to appropriate leaders
- Weekly registration on arrival at group
- Advertising

Health and Safety

Is there an existing Child Protection policy?

Do leaders need a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure or have they already been checked? (When did that happen?)

Do you have adequate insurance?

If the Church or building already has a policy check that it covers your group and its activities?

Are any of the leaders a qualified first aider?

Will they always be present or do more leaders need training?

Do you have an 'in date' first aid kit?

Do you have an accident reporting book?

Is there anywhere to record incidents?

Do you have a complaints procedure?

What are the fire procedures and are there adequate safety measures?

Have you done any Risk Assessments?

Particularly

- Telephone access for emergencies
- Toilet area
- Kitchen
- Entrance/Exit
- Main room to be used

Thinking about - Appropriateness and safety

- Steps
- Plug sockets
- Radiators/risk of burns
- Hidden corners or areas to explore



Suitability of Area

Where are you going to hold the group?

In a hall, in Church or rooms within it or somewhere else?

How many rooms are going to be used?

- Are they safe and suitable?
- How will they be set out to incorporate safe areas?

Are the toilets accessible?

- Do you need any potties, trainer seats or steps?

What facilities are there for changing nappies?

Are there suitable hand washing facilities?

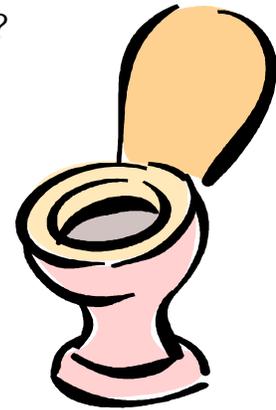
- How hot is the water?
- Can children reach the taps?

Is there enough safe storage for all the toys and equipment?

Is there a designated area for the storage of prams?

If preparing refreshments, are there suitable facilities?

- Are they clean, safe and hygienic?



Roles and Responsibilities

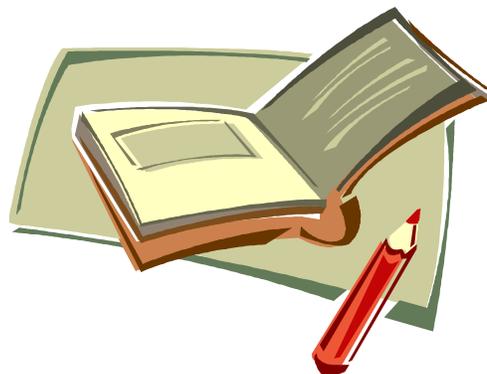
What responsibility will the parents or carers have?

How will roles be delegated, weekly, termly or permanently?

What skills do people already have, do you need to arrange further training?

Some tasks to think about-

- Cleaning and maintenance of toys and equipment
- Regular safety checks
- Administration
- Budgeting and finance
- Health and Safety issues like first aid and fire safety
- Session planning
- Preparation
- Refreshments



Session Structure

Will it be more of a toddler service, a time to play and chat or a combination?

What will happen during the session?

- Free play with a selection of toys to choose from
- Activities
- Craft
- Songs
- Story
- Prayers
- Refreshments



How long will it last?

What time of day?

What rules will you have and how will they be communicated?

What strategies will you use for dealing with difficult behaviour?

Do you have appropriate equipment, toys, books, craft materials and toileting aids? Are they clean, safe and meet safety standards?

Do you have enough cups, beakers and feeder cups for drinks so all abilities are catered for?

Connections

Will you be able to link with any other groups in the area or with local services or professionals who can offer more to the group?

- Church
- Mother's Union groups
- Local schools, nurseries, or play groups
- Library
- Community centre
- Health Visitors or Doctor's Surgery
- Local support groups like National Childbirth Trust or La Leche
- Programmes like Book Start or Sure Start

Back up and Support

What support do you have?

Has anyone in the congregation had similar experience and would be willing to act as a critical friend?

Are you on any prayer lists as individuals and as a group?

Are there people who will pray for the children and their carers?

Does your denomination have a Children's Adviser who could help you or a Resource Centre which might loan toys or books?

