



### What is Gumboots Supported Playgroup?

Gumboots Supported Playgroup in Yarra Junction is a free, relaxed, quality playgroup where children learn through play. The program supports children's development and learning and is led by a qualified early childhood teacher.

### History of Gumboots Supported Playgroup

Gumboots Supported Playgroup has been in operation in the Upper Yarra region for over 10 years. Originally held at the Woori Yallock Pre School and for the last four years has been held at Cire Services in Yarra Junction. Previously Gumboots Supported Playgroup was run by a parents' committee and a paid facilitator. Term fees were collected to support this. Nowadays the playgroup is a free program for families, with only a gold coin donation required to attend. In 2013 there were 6 families registered to attend Gumboots and now over 40 families attend this service.

### Why is Gumboots Supported Playgroup vital to our community?

The purpose of the Gumboots Supported Playgroup is to improve educational outcomes for all children with a focus on increasing access to early intervention for children and families. This is achieved through the provision of high quality playgroups in the Upper Yarra region, where children experience a range of educational activities and parents are assisted to support their child's learning.

The Upper Yarra is a locality with a mix of demographics including townships where significant proportions of families with young children experience low socio economic status and vulnerability. There is a large number of developmentally vulnerable children in the Upper Yarra region with many of these children starting school with inadequate preparation to reach their full potential.

The 2012 AEDC statistics indicate a high number of developmentally vulnerable children living in the Upper Yarra. Providing a supported playgroup has a strong focus on relationships; learning and development is vital for children as they progress through to preschool and become lifelong friends.

Gumboots Supported Playgroup is important because it supports children's growth, development and learning through play. The friendships formed in playgroups strengthen community bonds as they often continue through playgroup, preschool, school and become lifelong friends.

Research indicates that investment in the early years is an effective way to improve outcomes for the rest of a person's life, socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. Playgroup helps to build the capacity of parents, who are children's first educators, to offer rich learning environments at home and in the community.

What the parents have to say about Cire...

"Jake enjoys attending playgroup and **interacting** with **other children**. It's a time for **fun**, singing and playing (indoors and out). Watching the children **learn** and **explore together**. Highly recommended and a great way to meet other parents in the local area."

"Awesome **caring** staff who are **willing** to take **care** of individual **children's needs** no matter how difficult"

5967 2776  
[www.cire.org.au](http://www.cire.org.au)

## How is Gumboots different from regular playgroup?

Gumboots Supported Playgroup differs from regular playgroups because: The program is facilitated by a qualified early childhood educator. The facility is a purpose built early childhood setting offering maximum learning opportunities.

Everyone is welcome; Gumboots does not have a selection criteria for families to join.

- > Our program is based on the early years' framework.
- > No revenue is generated from this program, parents donate a gold coin.
- > Focus on families from a low socio-economic area and developmentally vulnerable children.
- > Offering social engagement and interactions with similar families.
- > The program is a balance of child initiated and adult initiated play and learning experiences

## Who attends Gumboots Supported Playgroup?

Families and children under 5 years old currently utilise the Gumboots Supported Playgroup. Sessions are run each Tuesday and Thursday during school terms.

The families who attend this service are a diverse group. Most families have two children, some with additional needs. The group consists of families who have moved to the Upper Yarra area and want to connect with other local families. Most parents are looking for regular socialisation and interaction with other parents and their children.

## How you can help support Gumboots Supported Playgroup

As a not for profit organisation, Cire Services relies heavily on funding and support through government, local and corporate grants as well as donations and sponsorship to ensure our services and programs are sustainable and ongoing in our community. Without the financial support required, families are disadvantaged. Cire requires your assistance to ensure these valuable services continue to grow and develop.

Currently the Gumboots Supported Playgroup is solely supported and funded through the Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise. Although this financial assistance is greatly appreciated. We seek ongoing donations to ensure the programs grow to offer more families access. Offering a free playgroup removes cost barriers and that enable more families to attend.

# What the parents have to say about Cire...

“Children are **actively involved** in being **environmentally responsible** and **supported** to **continue** this involvement within the program and in the local community.”

“Friendly and **approachable** staff, a **beautiful outdoor** area for all children.”

“Great **caring** staff, always **helpful** with my grandson's **daily needs**. Also **fabulous** with meals and diet requirements.”



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