



GGMG

GOLDEN GATE
MOTHERS GROUP®

GGMG P.O. Box 475866, San Francisco, CA 94147 www.ggmg.org

Playgroup Leader Guide

Thank you for becoming a leader! Here are some things you might be wondering:

How long do I have to be the leader?

What do I have to do?

Where should we meet?

How big is my playgroup?

What is BigTent and how can it help my playgroup?

What are Leader Appreciation Events?

What is the Playgroup Leader Forum?

Where can I learn more about how to manage my group?

Who do I go to with questions?





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How long do I have to be the leader?

There is no defined term for the position of leader; one can hold the position as long as it is working for you and the group. The most important thing is that everyone is happy with you and you are happy with the tasks at hand. Your group can choose to change its leader each year, half year or at another agreed upon time. Our only request is that you let the Playgroups Committee know when there is a new leader so we can update our contact information.

What do I have to do?

Your first task is to organize the date, time and location of the first playgroup meeting. You should send a message out to the group (using your group's forum on BigTent) letting them know the details of the first meeting. You can also schedule the event in your group's BigTent calendar (see the section entitled 'What is BigTent' for instructions on how to use the forum and calendar). We suggest you choose a time and place for the first meeting and once you are there everyone can sit down with their calendars and decide what will work for your group on a regular basis.

Tip: playgroup members should decide on a mutually agreeable time based on the children's napping patterns. As the children grow older, and napping times change from two naps to one, decide again whether the time should change to fit the children's new nap schedules.

A leader's most important role is to make sure gatherings are scheduled each week. Of equal importance is making sure responsibilities for hosting playgroups are evenly and equally distributed among the group so that some moms do not feel more burdened than others.

Where should we meet?

When your children are young (ie. before they're walking) it is easiest to meet in each other's homes. Once children begin to walk it becomes more difficult to have playgroups in homes. Here are some other ideas for where to meet:

- Playgrounds: http://www.ggmg.org/Playgrounds/playground_summary.html
- California Academy of Sciences
- Botanical Gardens at Golden Gate Park
- Bay Area Discovery Museum
- Yerba Buena Gardens
- Stow Lake at Golden Gate Park
- San Francisco Zoo
- San Francisco Public Library Story Hours
- The Randall Museum
- The Exploratorium
- The DeYoung Museum
- Crissy Field



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How big is my playgroup?

We have specified size limits for certain playgroups. They are as follows:

- Working Moms and Non-working Moms groups are set to a maximum size of 15 people
- Second-Time Moms groups are set to a maximum size of 25 people
- Neighborhood and special interest playgroups have no size limit

All playgroups will be available for any GGMG member to join so please expect new members regularly. Once a group has reached its maximum capacity, we will close it (meaning that no one else can join) and will create a new version of the playgroup for others to start joining. If you would like to change the size limitation at any time (for example, if you find that participation in your group is dropping and you would like to open it up for new members again) please send an email to playgroups@gmg.org and let us know.

What is BigTent and how can it help my playgroup?

BigTent is the technology platform that hosts all GGMG playgroups. It also hosts our discussion forums, classified ads and a variety of other resources. You can access it by going to https://www.bigtent.com/log_in

Once you have logged in, you can easily access your playgroup in BigTent by hovering your mouse over 'My Groups' in the top left-hand corner of the page then choosing the name of your playgroup. To access your playgroup's discussion forum, click on the 'forums' tab at the top of the page. To view your playgroup's calendar, click on the 'events' tab.

It is best to use BigTent to organize events and communicate with the group so that any new members will be able to quickly get up to speed on current events.

How do I schedule an event on my group's calendar?

Make sure you are looking at your playgroup (you should see the name of your group at the top of the page). If you don't, hover your mouse over 'My Groups' and select the name of your playgroup. Once you're looking at your group, click 'Events'. You should see an option to 'Add Event'. Complete the necessary information and choose 'Create & Send Notification'. This will let the rest of your playgroup know that you have scheduled a playdate.

How do I send a message to my group through our BigTent Forum?

For general communication amongst the group, click on the 'Forums' tab. To send a new message, click on 'Start a topic' and complete the necessary information.

Why are members not getting messages from me?

Some members may have their email notification set to 'Web Only' meaning that they will not be sent an email when new messages are posted to the forum. Tell them to follow these instructions:



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Login to BigTent. Go to 'Settings' then 'Email Options'. Find the name of this playgroup and look to the right to see how you will be notified of new messages. We recommend setting it to 'Email every message and comment' to be sure you are aware of what's going on with your playgroup. To change this setting, click on the box to the left of the playgroup's name then go to the drop-down box at the bottom of the page called 'Change notification to' and choose the option you'd like. Remember to click SAVE when you're done.

As an administrator, you have the ability to manually change your playgroup members' email settings. To do this, click on the red 'manage' link on your playgroup's main page. Click on 'Forums' then 'Notifications'. Here you will see how people are currently receiving messages that are posted to your forum. To make a change, click the box beside a member's name (or click 'Select All') then change the drop-down option to 'Email every message and comment'. Click 'Save'. This will ensure that members of your playgroup receive every message that is posted to the forum as an email message.

You can also choose to send an email blast to your group. To do that, you can either post an item on the 'news' tab or create an event in the calendar by clicking on the 'events' tab.

Here is a link to more information on posting a news entry: <http://support.bigtent.com/entries/155833>

Here is a link to more information on posting an event: <http://support.bigtent.com/entries/155629>

What are Leader Appreciation Events?

We realize that all moms are busy so we really appreciate the extra time and effort you are putting into being a leader for your playgroup. To recognize and support your efforts, GGMG will organize quarterly Playgroup Leader Appreciation Events. These will be social events aimed at building best practices amongst our playgroups as well as treating our leaders to some well deserved pampering. These events will be a great opportunity to share ideas and questions with other playgroup leaders. Watch the Playgroup Leader Forum for invitation details!

What is the Playgroup Leader Forum?

In order to facilitate communication between our playgroups, we have created a Playgroup Leader subgroup in BigTent. As a leader, you will be invited to join and participate as much or as little as you would like. You should receive an invitation to join this group shortly.

Where can I learn more about how to manage my group?

If you would like to learn more about features available to manage your group in BigTent, read the SubGroup Admin Guide: <http://ggmg.org/playgroups/SubgroupAdminGuide.doc> and visit the Coach Corner at <http://www.bigtent.com/coach/videos>



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Who do I go to with questions?

Thank you again for volunteering to be a playgroup leader! If you have questions at any time, please contact the Playgroups Committee at playgroups@ggmg.org