



**June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Dear friends,

It seems I am forming a pattern of beginning these emails in the early hours of the morning. I hope that as you all awake and start the day, though for many of you the day will be in full swing upon receiving this, that it is a day where you are once again struck by the majesty and glory of our great God.

I am continually thankful for those emails I receive from you letting me know what's happening in your world and ways I can support you. Thank you for taking the time to contact me and I apologise to those whom I have not yet responded to. Please know I have not forgotten you!

Today I am going to launch straight into the final topic of our series

### **Supporting Playgroup Families in their Parenting**

Last year our family moved from the leafy suburbs of Camberwell to the more urban suburb of Coburg. We discovered that though it's only a 20minute car trip, it's an entirely different world. We do love it over here but it's taken some time to adjust to the very different culture and corresponding values of this northern suburb. We have been helped by starting a Biblestudy with two other couples whom I believe God gifted to me (and perhaps me to them) in our Mother's Group. If you know the culture of this area you will realise why I consider this a gift! We meet fortnightly and have great community as we try to get our babes to sleep so we can share a meal and share in the Word.

What I've had reinforced to me as I've been exposed, or rather re-exposed (my husband being a Fitzroy boy in his childhood and myself a Brunswick/Fitzroy girl when I first moved to Melbourne) to this "new" culture, is that no matter how different our culture, and the cultural niceties, are – the undergirding challenges of life, and particularly new parenthood are much the same. Communication challenges, self-doubt, lack of sleep, money worries, frustration, transition, are really relative terms that strike most families, wherever they live.

At Playgroup, I am sure you realised by now, you have permission to speak into the lives of your families and offer them support and encouragement.

I recently spoke with a Playgroup Coordinator from one of our Playgroups who had a new, young Mum come to her group who was amazed and thrilled to learn that her baby liked to be bounced on the knee, listen along to music and that with some help, could clap hands! She went home feeling encouraged and enabled as a parent. What a wonderful gift she was given that day!!

As you interact with the families and parents in your midst, seek opportunities to encourage, and where appropriate, guide parents in their parenting. Done with kindness and encouragement, they will thank you for it!

I would like to commend to you the resources of [Parents Inc.](#) a NZ company committed to supporting and equipping families on the adventure of parenting!

If you've got a bookstall/library up and running these are some resources I encourage you to add

- [Parenting Magazine](#) (from Parents Inc.)
- [Growing Great Girls](#), the Boundaries Series are some great starters. I will be reviewing some books on Discipline for you shortly so you can add some quality material on this much needed topic to your library. The resources of [Steve Biddulph](#) are likely to be well known to you, but if not they are worth checking out, especially his renowned book "Raising Boys"

I also encourage you to consider running a [Toolbox Parenting](#) or [Starting Points Parenting Course](#) at your church.

If you would like to get trained for a Toolbox course please let me know & stay tuned – I am planning on hosting a Facilitator Training Day at the BUV in the coming months.

I hope that in raising these tree topics with you, you have gained a greater sense of the broader ministry you are part of in Playgroups. They can go well beyond the bounds of a two hour meeting a week and really transform families as whole and functioning units, and with God's help, into His Kingdom!

May you be blessed as you continue along this journey.

*Blessings,  
Louisa*