



# **PlayGym & Mini Movers Information Booklet**

**2019**

# The Benefits of Gymnastics in Kids Under 5

**Children aged 1 to 5 are in their peak period of motor skill development.** Fundamental movement patterns such as walking, running, skipping, hopping, squatting, and climbing do not occur naturally – they need to be taught! Gymnastics specifically targets these movement patterns through a variety of activities that will help teach children how to coordinate their bodies.

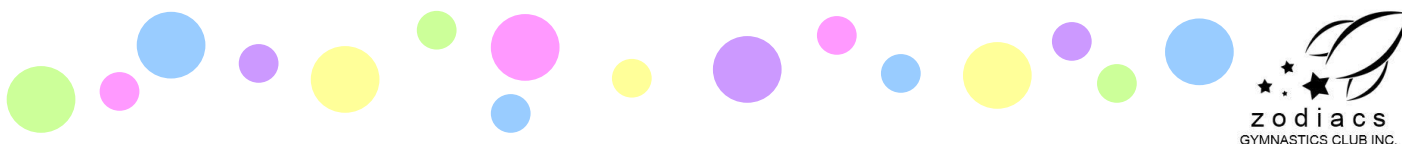
**Gymnastics teaches children postural control.** The body uses three systems to maintain posture: vestibular, visual, and proprioception. The vestibular system informs the brain of changes in our orientation due to changes in the fluid located in the middle ear. The visual system uses the eyes to provide the brain with visual information of our body and the environment. The proprioception system informs the brain of our bodies position and movements through the signals sent from our muscles and tendons. Gymnastics develops these three systems through a variety of activities that involve balancing, rolling, and movement of the body into different positions. A lack of development of these systems may lead to clumsiness, which can later impact a child's confidence in performing tasks that require coordination and balance.

**Gymnastics strengthens the connections between the two brain hemispheres.** The left brain hemisphere controls the right side of the body, and the right hemisphere the left side of the body. This is known as lateralisation. Strong connections between the two hemispheres leads to more refined motor skills and control of the body's limbs. In gymnastics, children will perform movements involving the coordination of both hands, both feet, and both hands and feet together which will strengthen the connection between their two brain hemispheres. Gymnastics also teaches children to "cross the midline" of their body (e.g., reaching across the body). This further strengthens connections within the brain related to movement and helps children develop their dominant hand.

**Gymnastics can help children with their reading and mathematical abilities.** Visual motor skills (i.e., hand-eye coordination tasks) have been found to improve children's reading ability (Son & Meisels, 2006). This is because hand-eye coordination tasks teach children to visually track information, which will then aid in their ability to read books left to right. Children with a better sense of balance have been found to perform better in mathematical tasks involving spatial scaling (understanding that the distance between objects doesn't change when the measurement scale does) and mental transformations (e.g., mentally manipulating visual information; Frick & Möhring, 2016). Children who participate in gymnastics classes are exposed to ample activities that involve visual tracking and balance.

## References:

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- Frick, A., & Möhring, W. (2016). A matter of balance: Motor control is related to children's spatial and proportional reasoning skills. *Frontiers in Psychology*.
- Kuther, T. L. (2017). *Lifespan Development: Lives in Context*. USA: Sage Publications
- Son, S. C., & Meisels, S. (2006). The relationship of young children's motor skills to later school achievement. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*.
- Timmons, B. W., Naylor, P., & Pfeiffer, K.A. (2007). Physical activity for preschool children – how much and how?. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*.



# What is PlayGym and Mini Movers?

PlayGym and Mini Movers are Zodiacs' fundamental gymnastics programs for children under the age of 5. Our PlayGym and Mini Movers programs follow Gymnastics Australia's (GA) KinderGym philosophy and guidelines, and are run by Nationally Accredited KinderGym coaches.

The GA KinderGym philosophy is three-fold:

1. Positive environments influence children's life attitudes towards physical activity;
2. Environments that encourage creative exploration and the practice of safe skills can build a child's confidence and self-esteem, as well as aid in the development of the whole child;
3. Providing a fun environment for the parent/caregiver and child to interact and play together is worthwhile.

At Zodiacs, we aim to give every child in PlayGym and Mini Movers the best opportunity to develop and grow as a person by providing a safe, fun, and stimulating environment that specifically targets the development of fine and gross motor skills, coordination, balance, body spatial awareness, and hand-eye coordination, as well as developing their ability to focus and problem solve, and teaching them to share, listen, and take turns.

## PlayGym

### **PlayGym is a program:**

- ❖ For children aged 18mths (walkers) – 5 years;
- ❖ That focuses on developing the child as a whole through a relaxed, non-competitive, and play based environment;
- ❖ That involves semi-structured lessons – the time and lesson activities are structured but you can work through activities at the pace your child wants to take;
- ❖ That encourages play and interaction between caregiver and child.

### **Lesson Structure:**

9:15 – 9:25am: Free Play and Exploration

9:25 – 9:30am: Parent/Child activity or Group Activity, and gymnastics shapes + stretching

9:30 – 9:40am: Gymnastics circuit 1

9:40 – 9:50am: Gymnastics circuit 2

9:50 – 9:57am: Trampoline

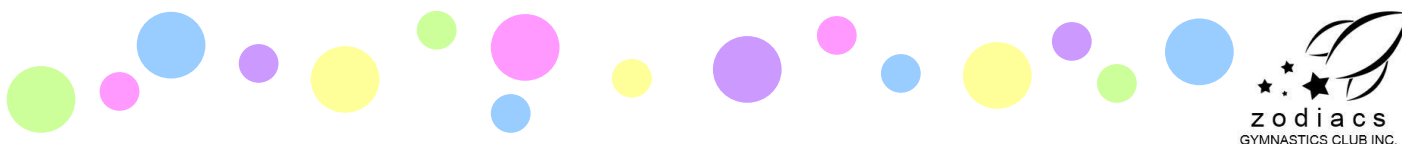
9:57-10:00am: Goodbye stickers and stamps

We run a fortnightly lesson plan. This means we keep our activities mostly the same for two weeks. This allows children to learn the activities in the first week, and consolidate their learning in the second.

### **Available Classes:**

Monday, Friday, and Saturday

*Parental/Guardian involvement required*



# Mini Movers

## Mini Movers is a program:

- ❖ For children aged 3 – 5 years (after at least 1 term in PlayGym);
- ❖ That focuses on developing the child as a whole and preparing them for school through a fun, non-competitive and structured environment;
- ❖ With more structured lessons than PlayGym – children are expected to move as a group between activities, move through activities in a specified order, and focus more on learning specific techniques for gymnastics skills;
- ❖ That encourages independence. Parent/Guardians are not required in this class, but should remain in the parent viewing area for the entirety of the class.

## Lesson Structure:

10:15 – 10:25am: Free Play and Exploration

10:25 – 10:30am: Group Activity, and gymnastics shapes + stretching

10:30 – 10:40am: Gymnastics circuit 1

10:40 – 10:50am: Gymnastics circuit 2

10:50 – 10:57am: Trampoline

10:57-11:00am: Goodbye stickers and stamps

We run a fortnightly lesson plan. This means we keep our activities mostly the same for two weeks. This allows children to learn the activities in the first week, and consolidate their learning in the second.

## Available Classes:

Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 10:15 – 11am

Friday 10:15 – 11am; 11 – 11:45am

# The Coaching Team

## **E-J (Ellen-Jane)**

E-J is the head coach of our PlayGym and Mini Movers programs and is in charge of designing the program.

E-J has the following accreditations and qualifications:

- ❖ Intermediate KinderGym coach
- ❖ Advanced WAG coach
- ❖ Intermediate WAG judge
- ❖ Bachelor of Psychological Science with First Class Honours

## **Emma**

Emma is the coach in charge of taking the PlayGym and Mini Movers classes in 2019.

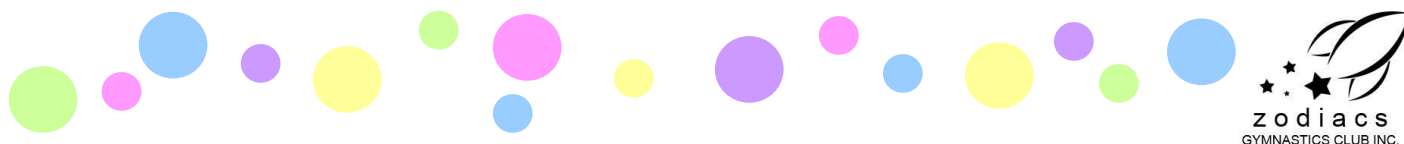
Emma has the following accreditations:

- ❖ Intermediate KinderGym coach
- ❖ Intermediate MAG coach
- ❖ Intermediate WAG coach
- ❖ Advanced WAG judge

## **Additional Coaches**

Shay (Trainee)

Trinity (Intermediate WAG coach)



# Themes

We incorporate themes into the PlayGym and Mini Movers programs for extra fun! Our themes change fortnightly and are listed below. We encourage your child to dress up to match the theme.

## Term 1:

Date	Week	Theme	Extra Information
11/2 – 23/2	1 and 2	Summer Fun	PlayGym: In week 2, please bring a beach towel for our parent/child activity
25/2 – 9/3	3 and 4	Signs & Directions	
11/3 – 23/3	5 and 6	Bugs, Bugs, Bugs	
25/3 – 6/4	7 and 8	We're Going on a Bear Hunt	Teddy bear companions welcome
8/4 – 13/4	9	When I Grow Up I'll Be...	

## Term 2:

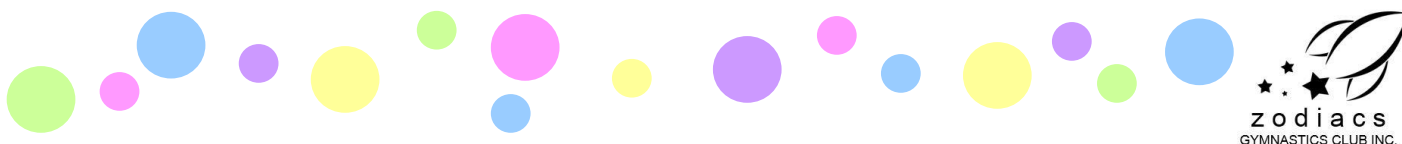
Date	Week	Theme	Extra Information
29/4 – 11/5	1 and 2	Space	
13/5 – 25/5	2 and 4	Body parts	
27/5 – 8/6	5 and 6	Dr. Seuss	
10/6 – 22/6	7 and 8	My Favourite Colour Is...	Please wear your favourite colour
24/6 – 6/7	9 and 10	Let's Go On Holiday to Hawaii!	

## Term 3:

Date	Week	Theme	Extra Information
22/7 – 3/8	1 and 2	In the Garden	
5/8 – 17/8	3 and 4	Let's Play – Sports!	Come dressed as your favourite sports player
19/8 – 31/8	5 and 6	Dinosaurs	
2/9 – 14/9	7 and 8	Wobble Wobbles (Balance)	
16/9 – 28/9	9 and 10	Outback Australia	

## Term 4:

Date	Week	Theme	Extra Information
14/10 – 26/10	1 and 2	Transportation	
28/10 – 2/11	3	Halloween	Spooky costumes welcome
4/11 – 16/11	4 and 5	Hiking Adventure!	
18/11 – 30/11	6 and 7	When I Went to Sea	
2/12 – 14/12	8 and 9	Christmas	We will also be working on our Display for the End of Year Display Day



# Parent/Guardian Role

## PlayGym Parent/Guardians:

- ❖ We require you to be on the floor at all times throughout the class in order to assist your child with activities, manage their behaviour, and ensure they are safe at all times.
- ❖ Our classes will always start with either a parent/child activity or group activity which will require your participation. This is not only a great way for you to do something fun with your child, but will also help them learn.
- ❖ PlayGym is not a strictly structured class, it's ok if your child does not want to do all the activities within a circuit or group time, let them do the activities they are happy to do.
- ❖ Younger (or older) siblings are allowed to accompany you with your PlayGym child throughout the class if it cannot be avoided. However, if they participate in the class you will be expected to pay for their attendance.

## Mini Movers Parent/Guardians:

- ❖ In this class the children are learning to be independent, so you are not required to be on the gymnastics floor with your child. Please watch and wait in the parent viewing area (black fenced area)
- ❖ We are happy for you to come into the gym area for Free Play – this gives you the opportunity to share gymnastics with your child and lets them show you what they can do up close
- ❖ Younger and older children are allowed to accompany you to the Mini Movers class, however they are not permitted to use the gymnastics equipment at any time and must remain with you in the parent viewing area for the duration of the class.

# Make Up Classes

When you enrol in a PlayGym/Mini Movers class, we ask you to commit to a day that you will attend every week. We know however that sometimes you will not always be able to attend on that day. We therefore offer make up classes for when you miss a class or can't attend your regular class.

## PlayGym:

You are welcome to attend any of the other PlayGym classes. If possible, please let us know in advanced that you will be attending on a different day to normal or an additional day (if making up for a missed class).

## Mini Movers:

Please contact us if you have missed a class or will be missing classes and we will try to fit you in for a make up class on your preferred day. Please note that due to limited class places in Mini Movers we may not always be able to accommodate your preferred class day.

## Contact Us:

Ph: 0418 288 295

Email: [zodiacsgym.burnie@gmail.com](mailto:zodiacsgym.burnie@gmail.com)

Website: [www.zodiacs.gymnastics.org.au](http://www.zodiacs.gymnastics.org.au)