

### Play Parachutes

Using a play parachute is a great way for seniors and children to participate together and is suitable for people either seated or standing. You can purchase a parachute or you can use a large piece of fabric such as a bed sheet. Start by lifting the parachute up and down, fast and slow, and shaking the parachute. In another experience, adults hold the parachute while the children are underneath. Adults can make waves with the parachute and enjoy the children's reactions.

Be aware that some seniors and children may need a gentle introduction to the parachute. The parachute may seem very big and, depending on the material, can make a noise which initially startles. You should also be aware of not using the play parachute for too long as it can be quite tiring for some participants!



### Bouncing game

Everybody, including seniors, children and parents/ caregivers, stands or sits in a circle, holding the edge of a parachute or large round piece of fabric. Put balloons, bean bags or soft toys in the centre and all together raise your arms and then lower them to make the balloon and toys bounce. Watch how far they fly up and encourage everyone to make them fly higher next time.

### The Rolling Game

For a change, place a beach ball (or balloon) on the parachute and get everybody to take turns to lift one side of the parachute then the other and watch it go from one side to the other.

"Who does it roll to"? Ask everybody to name the person it is rolling to. This is a great way to get to know each other and to help people to remember everybody's names.

### Singing and Calming Down

Towards the end of your playgroup session you may like to try this activity to slow the action down and get ready for stories or goodbyes.

Adults and seniors stand or sit in a circle holding the edge of a parachute or large round piece of fabric. Everybody then gently raises and lowers their arms in time with music or while everyone sings songs and rhymes. Encourage the children to lay underneath the parachute and enjoy the feeling of the parachute as it rises above them and floats back down.

Example: *Twinkle, twinkle little star* can be sung as the group softly moves the parachute with a small up/ down or side/side hand movements. For "*Up above the world so high*" line, lift the parachute with big up and down movements.



### Bubbles

Seniors and parents/caregivers can blow bubbles, use a bubble machine or wand, and watch the joy on the faces of everyone involved as they get popped or float away. (Be aware the floor may become slippery so best done outside or on a carpeted floor).

Everybody could join in and sing songs about bubbles. You could use a tune and make your own words or sing a song everybody knows.



### Bean Bags

Use a washing basket to catch the bean bags. Encourage the children to pass a beanbag to one of the seniors and to take one for themselves and then see who can throw the bean bag into the basket.

Alternatively, laminate colourful paper in circles, rectangles and/or squares and place a number on each. The children and seniors can then throw the bean bags onto them and see what colour or score they get.

### Playdough

Make playdough together by following the Playgroup WA recipe and then, when it is cool enough for seniors and children to touch, get everybody to take a small piece to knead until it is all worked in and smooth.

#### Playdough Recipe

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 3 teaspoons Cream of Tartar
- 2 cups boiling water\*
- Colour if required with edicol dye or food colouring

#### Method

Combine all ingredients (except water) in a bowl. Add boiling water and stir. Knead lightly on tabletop. This will store in an airtight container in the fridge for months.

\*Please be careful of boiling water around seniors and children.

Set up play dough activities on tables where everybody can reach it. Get everyone to sit together and make play dough gardens or cupcakes using patty pans and decorations. Encourage the seniors to work side by side with the children to help them select what they would like to use to decorate their creations.

This is a wonderful activity for everyone to have conversations and reminisce.



#### Thing to consider before playing with playdough

- Washing hands before and after playing with playdough is ideal. If a sink is not nearby, a bucket with warm soapy water and towels also works.
- Having the activity on tables with chairs and space for wheelchairs where everyone can participate together.
- Ideally try and do this activity in a space with hard floor or easy to clean flooring. If using playdough on carpet, you might like to use a tarp or similar cover to protect carpet and to make cleaning up quicker and easier.



### Balloon Play

#### Catch and Throw Play with Balloon Pattern

Children love balloons! Throwing balloons to each other, hanging them from a piece of string so they can be hit to and fro, or just try keeping the balloon in the air, are great indoor alternatives. However, they can be a little frightening for little ones who like to pinch them but don't like them popping!

Try our easy design for a balloon cover. All you will need is some fabric, thread, and a little time. Making the balloon cover is also great for the group to do in preparation of the activity or ask a local sewing or seniors group to make one for you.

#### Instructions

1. Balloon Template is shown over the page: Cut 8 side panels and 2 octagonal pieces.
2. Sew 8 x side panels together to create a circular ball shape. Leave the ends open
3. Sew in one octagonal piece at the base of the circular shape.
4. Create a small buttonhole in the other octagonal piece (this will be the upper end)
5. Sew this upper end piece into the ball shape you have created; ensuring the seam is on the inside of the ball
6. Push balloon through the buttonhole, blow it up and tie a knot in the end.
7. Push the whole balloon into the hole, including the knot



#### More Balloon Magic

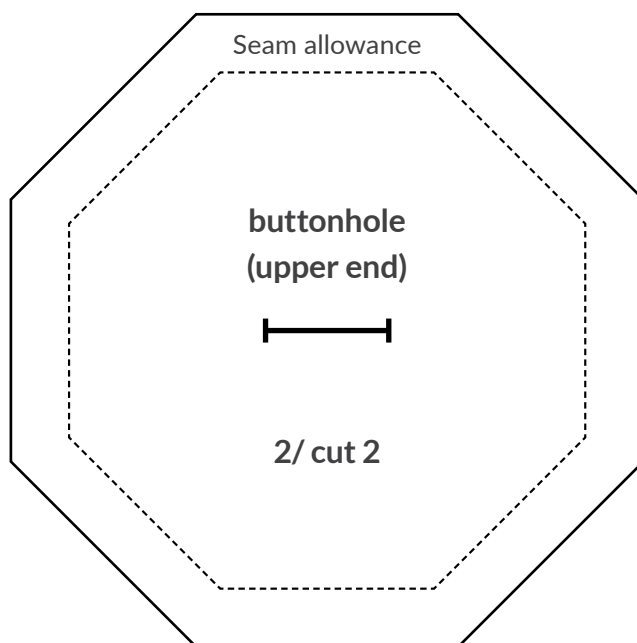
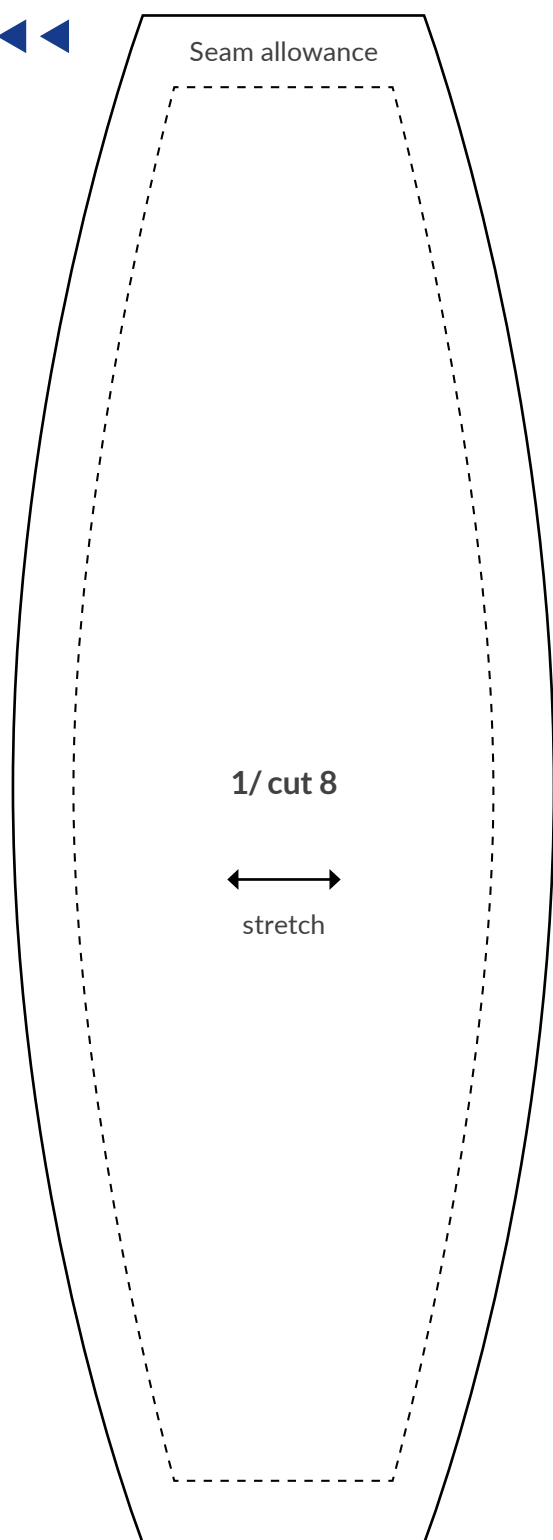
Use a large balloon and ask the children to pat it to the seniors. This could be done in pairs or as a group in a circle depending on the number of balloons you have. It's good exercise for everyone!

A balloon that is stronger than a regular balloon or is safer and ideal (Aged Care Facilities often have these). A beach ball can also be used to substitute a regular balloon. Strong balloons are generally available from party shops or Occupational Therapy providers.

Balloon Cover Pattern overleaf



### Balloon Cover Pattern



## Music and Story Time

### Sing-along

A unique part of intergenerational playgroup is the sharing of songs from all generations. Talk with everyone about songs they would like to share. If your group involves older seniors, some favourites might include: *Do Re Mi*, *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*, *Pack Up Your Troubles*, *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*, and *You are My Sunshine*.

Some popular nursery rhymes and songs are: *Wheels on the Bus*, *Row, Row, Row your Boat*, *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*, *The Grand Old Duke of York*, and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

Having large print copies of songs with the lyrics is helpful while singing.

Ask the seniors if they remember songs they sang to their children and all join in together.

**Items such as a play parachute, musical instruments or even scarves are great to use while singing together.**

### Song Bag

Make a song bag using a pillowcase or a container such as a shoe box and fill it with different toys relating to a nursery rhyme. Let the children pick out a toy and show the seniors what it is, then sing the song that it relates to. For example, you could have a **rubber duck** and sing *Five Little Ducks*, a **sheep** to sing *Baa Baa Black Sheep* or a **star** and sing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. You can also use a song bag with various **farm animals** for *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*.

### Books and Stories

Sharing of books and stories can be done both in a large or small group. You can have a selection of books available during the session. For example, a senior, parent, and child can freely look at books together. Or ask a senior or parent if they would like



to read a story to the group. Large books are great in a group setting.

Keep in mind, young children are likely to drift in and out of the story, and that is okay. Keep stories short and appropriate for the ages and stages of the children. Singing a couple songs can be a great way to transition into story time and attract people's attention and help children focus.

Cut out pictures from magazine and make your own books or make a book out of photos that have been taken of the playgroup participants. Everybody can work to assist the children where possible to cut their pictures and decorate their books.

#### Some great stories:

- Ten in the Bed
- Dear Zoo
- Giraffes Can't Dance
- Grandpa is Great
- The Tiger Who Came to Tea
- Spot Visits his Grandparents
- Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes
- We're Going on a Bear Hunt
- Where is the Green Sheep?
- Who Sank the Boat?
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar
- Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

**You can often find some great books at op shops at very affordable prices.**