

# TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE FAMILY GROUPS AND BABY WALKS

This guide from the Families Supporting Families project shares tips for inclusive family groups, walks and events.

## TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEW FAMILIES

When new people join your family group or walk, make sure they know the meeting time and place, and can contact you.

Say hello and welcome them to the group. You can ask questions and offer to introduce them to everyone.

Pay attention to see if everyone's included when you're chatting.

If you're on a walk, watch out for people lagging behind. People may need to walk slowly, or stop to comfort their baby. Wait patiently, or make sure someone is walking at the back with them.



## TIPS FOR REACHING LOCAL FAMILIES

Post in a local forum or social media group.

Ask local newsletters, GP offices, pharmacies and community organisations to help share your group with families.

You could also someone to translate key info about the group into different community languages.

Learn about accessible ways to communicate online. Share information in plain text - not just as an image.

## MENTAL WELLBEING TIPS

If someone isn't 'doing ok', try to chat. Listening to someone's experiences can make them feel less alone. Peer-support from people who know what you're going through can make a real difference.

Family groups can be a good space to share information about maternal mental health and talk about what helps us cope.

Share local groups and opportunities to socialise - parenthood can be lonely, and many people want more social connection.

## REMEMBERING FAMILIES ARE ALL DIFFERENT

LGBTQI+ families exist - and you can't tell who is LGBTQI+ just by looking at them. Try not to assume there won't be any lesbian, bisexual, gay, intersex or transgender people in your group.

Remember, if you don't know someone's gender, you can politely ask which pronouns they use - like 'she', 'he' or 'they'.

Every family is different. Try not to leave out single parent families, grandparents, foster parents, kinship carers and other kinds of parent, Mention that all family types are welcome!

To welcome different family types and transgender and nonbinary parents, you can use gender neutral language. For example, you could say 'parents' or 'everyone' instead of 'mums and dads'.

## TIPS FOR ACCESSIBLE FAMILY GROUPS

Accessibility looks different for everyone. You can let people know 'We're happy to make changes to make the group more accessible' and share a way to contact you.

You could plan step-free and barrier-free routes for family and baby walks.

If you're meeting in a room or cafe, let people know about anything which might affect access or comfort. Are there stairs, bright lights, loud noise?

Are there bathroom facilities? Is there space to breastfeed, pray or take meds?

Sharing info online, offline and in different languages can help reach more people.



## AVOIDING CLIQUES IN YOUR GROUP

Groups feel best when everyone is included. You could chat with people about building an inclusive group dynamic.

In the words of one friendship group: "We assure new members that we do not agree with 'cliques' in clubs like ours, that we are all great friends and hope they will enjoy being one of the crowd."

Mix up who you talk to. Listen to the quieter and new people in the group.

Sometimes you have to take the initiative to build a connection. You could offer to phone someone, share a resource with them, or send a message later in the week.

## ORGANISATIONS & RESOURCES

Speaking to other parents is a key way to share info about support. Ask people about good local groups, activities and support they recommend.

[Scottish Buggy Club on Facebook](#)

[Maternal Mental Health Alliance resource hub](#)

[Resources for Mums returning to work](#)

[Maternity Action advice resources](#)

[Mind's maternal mental health info](#)

[Paths for All Buggy Walks resources](#)