



GGMG

GOLDEN GATE MOTHERS GROUP®

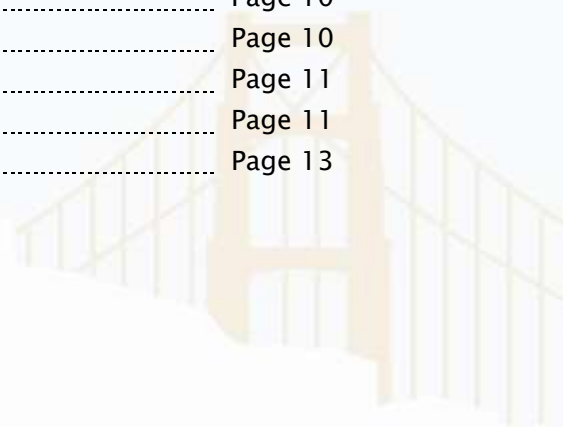
GGMG P.O. Box 475866, San Francisco, CA 94147 www.ggm.org

New Member Handbook

Welcome to the Golden Gate Mothers Group – also known as GGMG. We are so glad to have you as a member! This handbook is designed to help you get the most out of your membership. It describes the various activities and services available to you as a member and provides instructions for joining a playgroup and accessing GGMG’s online forums.

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What is GGMG?

The Golden Gate Mothers Group (GGMG) is a San Francisco–based mothers group that focuses on all things related to motherhood. GGMG was founded in 1996 by a group of San Francisco moms, led by Wynn McClenahan Burkett. The first general meeting was attended by approximately 50 moms. Now, almost 15 years later, many of the original steering committee members may not recognize the group they founded, but they would be proud to know that the guiding principles and statement of values remains the same.

Today, GGMG has over 4,000 members and is growing fast. Our group is still run entirely by volunteers—over eighty of them now—all of whom are moms and GGMG members, just like you.

Your membership provides you with the following services:

Online Forums – you have questions, our members have answers!

Playgroups and Special-Interest Groups – connect with other moms who have kids the same age, live in your neighborhood, or who have the same interests.

Newsletter—ten issues a year featuring articles on parenting, book reviews, a calendar of family activities and much more!

Kids Activities—try out GGMG–exclusive, discounted events for babies, toddlers and preschoolers each month.

Just For Moms—join other moms at venues around town for relaxing and socializing (without the kids!).

Educational Series—hear from experts on various topics related to parenting.

Social Events – join us for our family–friendly Easter, Summer and Halloween celebrations.

Community Support – get support from fellow moms and help support our larger Bay Area community.

Members Discounts – enjoy discounts from merchants all over the city.

GGMG websites

There are two websites that members can use to access GGMG services:

The GGMG website (www.gmg.org) contains a wealth of information about the group's programs and services. You can find event listings, member discounts merchants, and information about GGMG-supported charities. The "Community" tab includes a list of San Francisco parks and playgrounds with photos and descriptions, and member recommendations for kid-related services and activities.

BigTent (www.bigtent.com) hosts our discussion forums, classifieds and events calendar.

Working with BigTent

How do I log into BigTent?

When you joined GGMG, you created a username and password for BigTent. These are the same credentials you will use to access all of our online features. To access BigTent, go to www.bigtent.com.

How do I find the GGMG section on BigTent?

After logging in, you can access our forums, events and files by selecting "Golden Gate Mothers Group" from the "my groups" dropdown at the top of the page.

What can I do on BigTent?

Almost everything! Here is an overview of what you'll find in the tabs across the top of the page:

Buzz -a snapshot of what's happening right now in GGMG, including recent forum postings, upcoming events and current news.

Forums -read, search, post and comment in our General Parenting and Caregiver forums.

News- also known as the Fog Blog, features news and exclusive contests for our community.

Events- find and register for all GGMG events.

Files - information on a wide range of topics-including potty training, nanny contracts and preschools, members discount merchants, as well as GGMG newsletter archives.

Reviews–member reviews of local businesses (members are encouraged to list businesses they own).

Classifieds–post and search for items for sale, wanted or FREE.

Subgroups– lists specialty groups for members to join. This page can be difficult to navigate; please see www.gmg.org/groups.php.

How can I find out more about BigTent?

Check out our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page: ggmg.org/FAQ.html. You can also find a wealth of information on BigTent’s support site www.bigtent.com/help. If you can’t find what you are looking for, just send an email to questions@gmg.org for additional help.

Security Alert

Please do not share your BigTent username and password with anyone. Our online community (including the forums, classifieds and reviews) is meant for GGMG members only. If you have friends or caregivers who would like to access the information available to our group online, please encourage them to become a member of GGMG, or relay the information yourself. If you have any questions, please contact webmaster@gmg.org.

Online Forums

How do I access and search the forums?

The forums are located within BigTent, so the first step is to log in (https://www.bigtent.com/log_in). Once you are authenticated, click on the Forums tab; the search box is at the top. You can search all of the forums or just a particular forum, topics only or topics and comments, and filter by screen name or date.

How do I post a message to a forum?

We have four different forums:

- Parenting Questions: The place for parenting and pregnancy–related discussions, including questions about interacting with your caregivers.
- Miscellaneous Questions: A forum for all those “off topic” questions, such as home renovations, travel advice or general inquiries.
- Caregiver Search: Look for a new nanny, au pair or babysitter, or post recommendations for caregivers that you have used.
- GGMG Events & Announcements: Find out about upcoming events, including Playgroup Formations, Kids Activities and the Educational Series, as well as GGMG volunteer opportunities. Please note that we do not post these announcements in the other forums; you must subscribe to this forum to be notified of events.

There are a couple different ways to post to the forums:

1) Open the “Quicklinks” menu on the right-hand side of the page and select “Start a topic.” Check the appropriate forum for your post, type in your topic and message, and click “Post Topic.” Your message will be posted online and e-mailed to members who receive postings via email.

2) Click on the “forums” tab. (If you don’t see the “forums” tab, click on “my groups” in the black banner at the top of the page and select “Golden Gate Mothers Group.”) Click the blue “Start a Topic” box. Check the appropriate forum for your post, type in your topic and message, and click “Post Topic.” Your message will be posted online and e-mailed to members who receive postings via email.

Forum Posting Rules At-A-Glance (please see www.ggmg.org/Forum_Etiquette.html for complete information).

1. DO NOT SHARE your BigTent login credentials (username and password) with non-members such as your spouse or partner, your caregiver or your friends.
2. Choose only ONE forum for your post.
3. No posts promoting your own business. You may promote your own business in response to another member's question as long as you disclose your affiliation.
4. No solicitations, religious, political, organizing, or fundraising posts (except school fundraisers), chain messages, or requests for donations.
5. No posts for events, promotions, discounts, talks, openings, etc. unless they fulfill one of the following criteria: free and open to all; sponsored by GGGMG or the city; school fundraiser.
6. All caregiver recommendations must follow the template found here:
http://www.ggmg.org/Forum_Etiquette.html#template.

IMPORTANT: Please review our online forum polices (www.ggmg.org/Forum_Etiquette.html) before posting to the forums. You may also flag any postings that you would like to be reviewed by our forum moderators.

How do I create a bookmark to follow a conversation I’m interested in?

You can follow any topic you find interesting, or any classified listing, calendar event or journal entry by bookmarking it. (Click the blue “Bookmark now” link at the bottom of the page.) To

access your bookmarks, choose the “bookmarks” link in the “my bigtent” drop down menu at the top of the page.

How do I post a private comment on a forum topic?

Want to post a comment for the author of a forum topic or anonymous post and not reveal your identity to the group? You can do this by posting a private comment that will only reveal your identity to the author of the forum topic. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Find the “forums” tab and click the topic you wish to comment on.
2. Go to the comment box, enter your comment and check the box labeled “Private Comment.”
3. Click the “Post Comment” button.

Your comment will only be viewable by the author of the topic and yourself. Please note: your identity can be revealed if you have set an automatic email vacation responder. We advise members posting anonymously to use personal emails and be aware of any vacation email settings.

Why hasn't my forum posting shown up yet?

Anonymous forum postings are moderated and must be approved before they are visible in BigTent. Generally, postings are reviewed and accepted within 24 hours. If your posting has not been listed after 24 hours, please review our forum policies (www.ggmg.org/Forum_Etiquette.html). Please note that moderators will not be able to contact you about a violation. If you have any questions please contact webmaster@ggmg.org.

How do I change the type and frequency of emails I'm receiving from BigTent?

Choose “settings” from the “my bigtent” drop-down menu at the top of the page. To the left, you'll see several tabs to choose from. Click on “email options.” Check the box next the forum you want to modify and make your selection from the “Change notification to:” pull-down menu, then click “Save.” You have the following options:

- **None, hidden** — you will not see this forum in BigTent or receive any emails from it.
- **Web Only** — you will not receive any emails from this forum but can view the forum in BigTent.
- **Summarize in Blink** — the Blink is like an electronic digest that comes to your email box on the days and times you specify.
- **Email Daily Message Digest (topics only)** — a summary of every 25 new topics posted on the forum; comments are not included in the digest but can be viewed online.
- **Email Daily Message Digest (topics and comments)** — a summary of every 25 forum postings, including both new topics and comments on previously-posted topics.
- **Email Every Topic (comments web only)** — each new topic posted will be emailed to you; comments are not included but can be viewed online.
- **Email Every Message and Comment** — each new forum topic and the comments connected to it will be emailed to you.

How do I stop the emails entirely?

Choose “settings” from the “my bigtent” drop-down menu at the top of the page. To the left, you’ll see several tabs to choose from. Click on “email options.” Under “Forums,” check all the forums listed and choose “Web Only” in the “Change Notification to” pull-down menu, then click “Save.” Under “Classifieds,” check “No” and make sure the other options are unchecked, then click “Save.” Under BigTent Blink, choose “Do Not Send,” then click “Save.” Under “Personal,” set Bookmarks to “None,” uncheck other options, then click “Save.” After following these steps, you should no longer receive any BigTent emails. You will still be able to view the forums, classifieds, etc. online, and you can change these settings at any time.

I am not receiving some emails. Why?

Emails from BigTent may end up in your SPAM folder. You might want to modify your SPAM filter to accept any email with BigTent in the sender name and/or add the following email aliases to your contacts: *ggmg_general@lists.bigtent.com*, *ggmg_caregiver@lists.bigtent.com*, *ggmg_classifieds@lists.bigtent.com*, *no_reply@lists.bigtent.com* (for daily digest). Anonymous posts are currently moderated; the message you were looking for may still be in the queue for moderation, or may not have been approved because it did not adhere to the forum’s policies.

Newsletter

How many GGMG Newsletters per year?

The GGMG newsletter is sent 10 times per year: February, March, April, May, June, July/August, September, October, November, December/January.

Help, I didn’t receive my newsletter!

The newsletter mailing list is pulled directly from BigTent on the 15th of each month; if you signed up for GGMG membership after the 15th, there may be a one-month lag time. If you are an existing member who didn’t receive your newsletter, please check your BigTent profile to make sure that your address is listed correctly.

Can I read the GGMG Newsletter online?

The newsletter is sent to all members who have an updated address in BigTent; at this time there is no electronic version of the paper newsletter. You can read the newsletter in .pdf format by going to the ‘files’ tab in BigTent.

What is included in my monthly GGMG Newsletter?

The newsletter is a 40-page full-color magazine. Inside, you’ll find feature articles on various topics, most of them written by newsletter staff writers, who are moms and GGMG members. At the center of the newsletter you’ll find a calendar of low-cost community events that cater to families with young children. We run several columns from local writers and experts in their field (from dads to medical professionals). You’ll also get monthly updates from other GGMG

committees and hear from GGMG's board members about the focus and direction of the organization. Throughout, you will find photographs by our staff photographers (also GGMG members), who focus on local environs and models.

Can I write an article for the GGMG Newsletter?

We do have several full-time staff writers, but we often feature outside contributors, including GGMG members. If you are interested in writing for us, please see our writers' guidelines: ggmg.org/newsletterguidelines.html.

Where does the GGMG Newsletter budget come from?

The newsletter is subsidized in part by GGMG member dues and also through paid advertising. Because of our non-profit tax filing status, there are limits to the amount of advertising income we can generate. This leaves advertising rates relatively low and in high demand. The main cost of the newsletter is for the professional printing services. The GGMG Newsletter is created and produced by a team of GGMG volunteers (editors, feature and column writers, copy editors, photographers, classifieds listing, paid advertising management, layout and design).

How can I support my business in the GGMG newsletter?

GGMG members are welcome to run paid ads. You can find more info on ad rates and reservation forms at ggmg.org/adrates.html. Members are also permitted to run free classified ads of 80 words or less. For more details and submission guidelines visit ggmg.org/classifieds.html.

For more information on the newsletter, please email newsletter@ggmg.org.

Playgroups

What is a playgroup?

A playgroup is a small gathering of moms and their children who get together on a regular basis for play and interaction. Joining a playgroup gives you a chance to meet, share experiences and learn from other parents—adding up to newfound friendships and a healthy, nurturing environment for kids. As such, most groups prefer that no caretakers other than moms attend a playgroup meeting.

How does a playgroup work?

Playgroup members take turns planning a weekly gathering, typically once a week. Moms meet at members' homes, or in public places like parks or cafes for one to two hours. During this time, moms talk and older children play together and learn invaluable social skills as they grow. Participation by all members is key to maintaining the group.

How do I join a playgroup?

Members interested in joining a playgroup have two options to choose from:

1. **By Age.** Join a group of moms with similarly-aged babies by attending one of the monthly in-person Playgroup Formation events. The face-to-face meeting helps members get to know each other, share contact information and establish a plan to meet regularly. Events are announced in the newsletter and through BigTent.
2. **By Special Interest.** Join a special interest group online anytime. Go to www.bigtent.com and click on the “Subgroups” tab. These groups have been formed by members with unique interests, such as Farsi-speaking moms, vegetarians, designers and artists, and moms over 40. These groups typically include children with a range of ages. There are also groups—such as book clubs and running clubs—designed for moms to participate in without their children.

If you have questions or would like to request the creation of a new group, send an email to playgroups@ggmg.org.

Social Events

Throughout the year, we host fantastic social events for our members and their families. We celebrate Halloween in late October, host an Easter Egg Hunt in the spring and a Summer Fair in the summer. These events feature entertainment, activities and goodie bags for the children. Watch for announcements for these events in BigTent and the newsletter. Please note: these events are very popular. We recommend an early registration so we can be sure to have enough of everything to make all our little guests happy.

Kids Activities

What does the Kids Activities Committee do?

We plan group activities for moms and children every month. Popular recurring events include children’s music, gymnastics, dance, swimming and yoga classes, walks for moms and infants, as well as berry and pumpkin picking trips. Different activities are planned for our three target ages: newborn to walking, toddlers and preschoolers.

How do I participate in a Kids Activities event?

We require our members to register, and pay (if applicable) in advance for all Kids Activities events so we can secure group discounts, ensure we don’t overbook an event and adequately prepare for our members’ enjoyment. Dads and caregivers are welcome to attend most Kids Activities events. Check out the ‘Events’ tab in BigTent to find and register for upcoming events.

Just For Moms Activities

What does the Just For Moms (JFM) Committee do?

We organize relaxing and entertaining events for moms to enjoy without their kids, such as private shopping events (make-up, bras, and baby products/clothes), lunches, dinners, group cooking/baking classes, wine tastings, Sunday brunches, game nights, movie nights and happy hours. We are always looking for fresh ideas, new locations, volunteers and your favorite activity to re-discover as a mom with other moms. Please send us a note if you have something to contribute to justformoms@ggmg.org.

How can I participate in a JFM event?

Our events are published on the BigTent calendar (see the 'events' tab) and in the newsletter. As space is limited, registration is required for all of our events via BigTent.

Why should I attend a JFM event?

Our events are for new moms, veteran moms, stay-at-home moms, working moms and everything in between. We want to share with each other the laughs, tears and challenges that come from being a mom...and be able to complete a sentence without our "little distractions."

Educational Series

What does the Educational Series (ES) Committee do?

Our seminars are focused on the specific challenges of parenting young children. We offer classes on topics such as children and infant CPR, discipline, language development, lactation, sleep training, potty training, kindergarten, preschool, etc. We select topics of interests based on our members' feedback, look for reputable speakers to organize the class and negotiate the best possible pricing for our members.

How does ES Committee work?

We are always looking for new topics, subjects and speakers. We'd love to hear your ideas and if there is any particular class you'd like to see in our listings... and we are always open to new volunteers.

Please send us a note if you have something to contribute to education@ggmg.org.

How can I participate in an Educational Series event?

Our events are published on the BigTent Calendar (click on the 'events' tab) and the newsletter. As space is limited, registration is required for all of our events via BigTent.

Why should I attend a ES event?

There are several ES classes each month at different locations in San Francisco and different

dates to allow both working and stay-at-home moms to participate. Our classes are generally small in size and they last one or two hours. You'll be able to learn different parenting approaches and philosophies, access resources, ask questions to Bay Area professionals and share comments and experiences with fellow moms going through the same challenges that you are. Plus, many of our classes are free!

For questions about Educational Series, please contact us at education@gmg.org.

Community Support

What does the Community Support Committee do?

We create and coordinate ways for our membership community to help each other as well as our greater community. We support our internal community of moms and families through our volunteer-run meal delivery service called "Helping Hand." We support our external community through diaper drives at major events and distributed to organizations in San Francisco. We also coordinate programs to enable members and their families to donate time, money, or goods to organizations in need. In the past, we have run "Finds and Farewells," a sale where members can sell child and maternity items they no longer need to parents who are looking for gently used items.

How do I request a meal?

As moms, we all find ourselves in need of a helping hand. Whether you just brought home a new bundle of joy, are laid up on bed rest, your partner is out of town or just plain overwhelmed, email helpinghand@gmg.org and request meal to be delivered. Please include how many people the meal needs to feed, any dietary restrictions, when you would like the meal and where you live. Another GGMG member will contact you to confirm.

How do I sign up to deliver a meal?

If you would like to deliver a meal to a GGMG member, sign up for the Helping Hand subgroup on BigTent. You will be notified each time a mom requests a meal and can RSVP through BigTent. Meals can either be prepared at home or purchased. Volunteers who complete the meal delivery are mentioned in the newsletter and given a grocery store gift card upon completion.

For questions about Community Support, please contact us at communitysupport@gmg.org.

Members Discounts

What is the Members Discount Program?

The GGMG Members Discount Program offers our members valuable discounts and exclusive benefits from participating local and online retailers and service providers. In addition, Seasonal

Promotions highlight select vendors who are offering a significant discount or benefit for a limited time only. Look for these special offerings in the GGMG Newsletter and forums around Valentines Day, Mother's Day, summer and the winter holidays.

Which businesses participate in the program?

Visit www.gmg.org/discount.html for the list of vendors participating in the program and the discount they are offering GGMG members. The list is updated regularly as new vendors are added to the program. Vendors are listed both alphabetically and by category. You can also join the Members Discount subgroup on BigTent to stay updated.

What do I need to do to receive a discount?

Most brick and mortar businesses just require proof of membership and occasionally proof of ID. Your membership card or a copy of your GGMG newsletter showing your name and address will suffice. In some cases, a physical coupon or a specific sign-up process may be required. Any special requirements will be noted in the vendor listings.

Online retailers usually have a coupon code to enter during checkout. A list of these codes can be found in the BigTent 'files' tab under the tag 'Members Discount Program.' Again, any special requirements will be noted in the vendor listings.

I lost my membership card! What do I do?

We are no longer issuing membership cards, but you can now print your GGMG membership card by downloading the file at <http://www.bigtent.com/group/folder/tag/membership+card>. (BigTent login required). Detailed instructions on creating and printing the card are provided in the file. For technical support in creating your card, please e-mail webmaster@gmg.org.

You can also clip the top half of the back cover of your newsletter containing your name, address and the GGMG logo as proof of membership.

My favorite store, website, service provider is not in the program – what can I do?

Just let us know! We are constantly adding vendors to the program and want to make sure the program reflects the needs of our members. Just send an email to: membersdiscounts@gmg.org, and we will contact the business and get them in the program.

I would like to participate in the program as a vendor. What do I need to do?

We love to include our members' businesses in the program. Just visit gmg.org/vendor.html to review the participation requirements and fill out the enrollment form found on that page.

For any other questions, please email membersdiscounts@gmg.org.

Contact Information

Again, thank you for joining Golden Gate Mothers Group. We hope you find the support, information and resources you need to help you make the most of this crazy journey called 'Motherhood'. If you run into any trouble, feel free to send us an email:

General Inquiries	questions@ggmg.org
Directors	codirectors@ggmg.org
Membership	membership@ggmg.org
Newsletter	newsletter@ggmg.org
Playgroups	playgroups@ggmg.org
Community Support	communitysupport@ggmg.org
Members Discounts	membersdiscounts@ggmg.org
Just for Moms	justformoms@ggmg.org
Kids Activities	activities@ggmg.org
Social Events	rsvp@ggmg.org
Educational Series	education@ggmg.org
Recruiting	recruiting@ggmg.org
Websites	webmaster@ggmg.org