



# Acacia Kindergarten

## 2022 annual report to the community

Acacia Kindergarten Number: 6501

Partnership: Blue Lake

Signature

Preschool director:

Mrs Jane McDonald

Governing council chair:

Andrew West

Date of endorsement:

March 2023



Government  
of South Australia  
Department for Education

## Context and highlights

We are co-located with Mount Gambier North Primary School & part of the Department for Education Blue Lake Partnership. In 2022 terms 1-3 Jane McDonald & Fiona Scott shared the Director role, with Jane McDonald moving to fulltime Director in term 4. 5 full day sessions continued, all children including our Inclusive Preschool Program, attend a fortnightly booking pattern, consecutive day's supporting continuity of learning & educators & positively impacting relationships, wellbeing and involvement. Supported Playgroup ran Wednesday mornings with increased number attending with the change of days. We further developed knowledge to support families in building children's love of literacy, modelled strategies, created a family borrowing library & reading tree, and engaged in the "Word Grow Minds" campaign further promoting early literacy. We implement Bilingual Playgroup for children & families who are non-English speaking, supported by a Bilingual educator, aligned with the existing playgroup to further build relationships and connections. Staff implemented Berry Street Education strategies within our practices & environments with an intentional focus on the Zones of Regulation building children's emotional literacy and regulation strategies. Our journey with Dogs Connect continued, introducing our wellbeing dogs Cooper, Duke and Opal as tools to help children, families & educators be more regulated & aware of emotions & feelings. We were proud to receive our Dogs Connect Accreditation at the end of 2022, now making us an officially accredited site. Our Artist in Residence, Deborah Rogers continued her art curriculum each week with the children providing artistic extension and regulation using artistic experience and expression. We continued building relationships with our co-located school through weekly music & movement session. We had Family Picnic night in term 2 deepening connection with and between our community and Family book reading night in term 3 with community guest readers. All children made progress across the year towards our site improvement goal and educators further developed the teaching pedagogies to support improved outcomes for children's wellbeing and learning. I (Jane McDonald) was asked to present Acacia Kindergarten's wellbeing and regulation practices as part of a keynote on 'The essential elements of a quality preschool program' at the Department for Education State-wide 'Leader's Day' in term three. This presentation was received well by other leaders across the state and lead to further critical reflection and collaboration across sites in this area. We ended the year with a flooring upgrade which has not only improved the safety and look of the kindergarten but also added to the calm and regulating atmosphere of the environment.

## Governing council report

Sitting back and reflecting on 2022, I am so grateful to be a part of the Acacia Kindergarten community. There have been many developments in the past year that the staff and Governing Council have contributed to. After training last year, the educators have implemented Berry Street Education Model strategies within their practice and environment, which supports and extends on the Zones of Regulation curriculum. Playgroup was changed from Friday to Wednesday mornings, which has increased in numbers. Bilingual Playgroup was implemented in term 4, for children and families who are non-English speaking, and was supported by a bilingual educator. It was aligned with the existing playgroup to further build relationships and connections. We held a few events and enjoyed the company of our Artist in Residence, Deborah Rogers (Deb). In term 2, we had a family picnic night which helped deepen connections with our community. In term 3, we had a family book reading night with community guest readers. Deb continues to enrich our art curriculum with weekly workshops, and the children look forward to 'Art with Deb' each Wednesday. Over the end of year break, the flooring in the kitchen, bathroom and dining areas has been updated from the old linoleum to more modern and appealing floor coverings. The outside of the building has evolved as Deb continues to work on the mural near the entrance, creating a talking point and source of interest for the children. It is a great accomplishment for Acacia Kindergarten to have gained Dogs Connect Accreditation at the end of 2022, making us an officially accredited site. We are privileged to have Cooper, Opal and Duke as our wellbeing dogs. They are valuable tools for emotional regulation, connection and a multitude of curriculum learning, and a wonderful addition to the Acacia family. I would like to extend my thanks to the 2022 Governing Council members for being a part of the Acacia family. Life leaves little time for these activities, and we are thankful for your support of Acacia Kindergarten, and the young citizens of Mount Gambier. I would like to thank the staff for their thoughtful and meaningful documentation, their commitment to the children and the extra effort they put into the kindergarten for children and families. Acacia's team of educators works beautifully together to create an open, genuine, and compassionate environment. We appreciate each and every one of you. To our Directors Jane and Fiona, thank you for your amazing work this past year and we are grateful for your inspiring and dedicated leadership. I look forward to another year working alongside Jane as part of the Governing Council.

Andrew West,  
Governing Council Chairperson

# Preschool quality improvement planning

Goal 1: To develop children's capacity to use sophisticated language to connect and communicate.

To build children's capacity to use sophisticated language to connect and communicate we reflected critically on our observational data, educator practices and our learning environment to inform planning, engaged in evidenced research, and professional development. We also engaged with a professional mentor to build educators understanding of how to intentionally scaffold children's capacity to use sophisticated language to connect and communicate through playful pedagogies. Educators first built their understanding of what children would be doing and saying in the stages developing more sophisticated language and different ways to connect and communicate, deepen our knowledge of strategies to scaffold these stages and gathered data to evidence progress made across the year. From this we began working on building children's vocabulary through intentionally scaffolding more sophisticated language using the 'define, do, revise' teaching strategy within their play where each child's level of language was recognised and built upon in a play-based way. Next, we used the 'multiple exposure' teaching strategy to embed the 'colourful semantics' approach of scaffolding children's capacity to use longer and more complex sentences across playful learning environments. The last teaching strategy we used to support this goal was 'see, show, say' which while further developed children's vocabulary and sentence structure but also support children to initiate and maintain reciprocal conversations with educators and peers. Our end of year evaluation and review process showed that all children's made process towards achieving this literacy goal and educator's further developed their pedagogies to intentionally develop literacy skills within playful learning experiences and environments.

Educators completed the Dogs Connect mentorship program further implemented strategies from this program in our practices and environment to support children's wellbeing and strategies to regulate. Music and movement as a strategy for teaching and learning was strengthened as we engaged in further professional development in this area, and we explored its link in supporting children's wellbeing and regulation. We began our engagement with the Department for Education Occupational Therapist with an environmental and educator knowledge being conducted to inform strategic planning for wellbeing and regulation improvement in 2023. We continued to develop our understanding of pedagogical documentation in a range of media with a focus of documenting and analysing the impact of our actions and interactions on children's learning and collaborated with other sites in our portfolio to build our knowledge and collective minds. Our collaborative work with kindergartens in our portfolio, Student Support Services Special Educator, Early Childhood Leader and a Senior Adviser of the Inclusive Teaching and Learning Directorate, Support and Inclusion Division further strengthened educator's ability to identify, track and monitor children's areas for growth and intentionally plan for and teach targeted responses to support individual children, small groups and whole of site strategies across learning areas to improve outcomes for children.

# Enrolment

Year	Enrolment by Term			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2018	68	68	67	69
2019	67	68	68	69
2020	55	N/A	57	56
2021	58	60	61	61
2022	52	53	56	N/A

NOTE: The data is based on person counts in the two week reference period each term. Excludes pre-entry.

Data Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Reporting and Analytics directorate.

Term 2 2020 data may not be available for all preschools.

# Attendance

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2017 centre	85.8%	92.9%	93.3%	99.0%
2018 centre	95.3%	96.1%	95.2%	95.9%
2019 centre	94.3%	91.1%	90.4%	89.1%
2020 centre	96.7%		90.1%	82.0%
2021 centre	89.0%	85.7%	87.1%	80.3%
2022 centre	81.8%	82.3%	81.9%	80.3%
2017 state	90.7%	88.8%	86.7%	87.7%
2018 state	91.0%	88.7%	88.0%	88.3%
2019 state	90.8%	88.2%	86.8%	87.6%
2020 state	89.8%	83.6%	86.2%	87.2%
2021 state	88.6%	86.5%	88.6%	85.6%
2022 state	84.9%	79.8%	80.3%	N/A

Based on attendances recorded in the two week reference period each term. Data for eligible enrolments as described in the department's Enrolment policy.

Attendance rates may differ to previous reporting with the transfer from calculations based on deemed attendance to actual attendance using booked hours divided by attended hours.

\*Note: Term 2 2020 data may not be available for all preschools.

# Attendance comment

Our families send their children to kindergarten on a regular basis throughout the year. Full days and continuity in days continue to support our family's needs and children's attendance. Data shows that attendance at Acacia Kindergarten increased during 2022 and typically remains above the state average. To begin 2022 our enrolment capacity was reduced to 55 children as our category ranking changed from 1 to 2. Enrolment numbers were consistent across the year and our enrolment capacity was increased in term 3 to accommodate for a child in care. The Department of Education has increased the site's capacity to 60 for 2023 and our category ranking has changed from 2 to 1. Where possible it is beneficial for the site to have some enrolment places available for families arriving as Humanitarian Refugees throughout the year as these children transition to the Intensive English Learning Program at Mount Gambier North Primary School.

## Destination schools

Feeder Schools (Site number - Name)	2019	2020	2021	2022
724 - Compton Primary School	6.8%	5.8%	6.0%	6.0%
279 - Moorak Primary School	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
953 - Mount Gambier North Primary School	49.2%	42.3%	38.0%	38.0%
290 - Reidy Park Primary School	11.9%	25.0%	32.0%	16.0%
8359 - St Martins Lutheran College	1.7%	1.9%	2.0%	8.0%
422 - Suttontown Primary School	5.1%	1.9%	14.0%	6.0%
8260 - Tenison Woods College	5.1%	13.5%	4.0%	12.0%
501 - Yahl Primary School	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%

NOTE: The data is collected in Term3. It does not reflect actual schools enrolled in by exiting preschool children. Only schools that are a destination for 3% or more of students are shown.

Data Source: Site Performance Reporting System (SPER), Term3 2022 collection.

## Destination schools comment

Acacia Kindergarten continues to feed to various schools in Mount Gambier and surrounding districts. The majority of children continue to enrol at the co-located school, Mount Gambier North Primary School. Acacia Kindergarten and Mount Gambier North Reception classes have developed strong collaborative relationships, focusing on transition and continuity of learning. The second largest feeder school, Reidy Park is within the kindergarten's priority one catchment area.

## Family opinion survey summary

The purpose of the parent opinion survey is to gather information from parents to determine their feelings on our service delivery. All families were provided with either a paper or electronic copy of the survey to provide for the diversity in ways people prefer to complete the survey. Comments provided by families indicate that overall, our Kindergarten families continue to be highly satisfied with the quality of education and care provided to their children. Throughout the survey a large percentage of parents indicated through agreeing or strongly agreeing that our kindergarten provides high quality, engaging and enjoyable teaching programs and practices with high expectations that children will learn, educators are knowledgeable, caring and enthusiastic and provide an excellent learning environment. Families "an amazing site with caring and nurturing educators and whole team who provide rigorous and engaging learning opportunities for the children. We couldn't be happier and thoroughly commend all the staff for their efforts and time. They do amazing things and work so hard." I love all the teachers there, they are all very caring & always take the time to chat if needed & keep parents informed of what's been going on with our kids." "I love how we are updated on our child's development on seesaw." "My son is high functioning autistic. He is part of a group of children with special needs. The Directors applied for funding, in order to obtain assistance regarding his class. The educator hired, as well as the rest of the staff make every effort to ensure his development is progressive, and targets areas of deficiencies. There is also a Therapy school dog that has made as enormous impact on my child. This preschool is highly recommended." The majority of the responses to the survey questions were either 'strongly agree' or 'agree', however there were a few 'neutral' or 'disagree' with some families reflecting that they are not always kept up to date with the progress and achievement of their child through Seesaw, a comment that was made that educators were always available to discuss their child's learning, but they would like more individual Seesaw posts. This year we continued to use Seesaw as a tool for communicating children's progress. This is something we continue to modify and adapt year to year to meet the needs of our families and document children's learning. It was once again evident that a strong majority of parents are satisfied with the education and care being provided for their children and are happy with the service. We will continue to look at ways for improvement in the areas identified during 2023.

## Relevant history screening

Staff, volunteers and student teachers at the preschool hold relevant history screening clearances. The site follows the Department for Education and internal processes to ensure these are up to date.

## Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$78,230
Grants: Commonwealth	\$0
Parent Contributions	\$26,685
Other	\$2,020

## 2022 Preschool annual report: Improved outcomes funding

Improved outcomes category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2021 funding was used to improve the relevant department's standard of educational achievement outcomes (where applicable):*	Outcomes achieved or progress towards these outcomes:
Improved outcomes for numeracy and literacy	Funding for improved outcomes for numeracy and literacy was allocated to professional development for staff, including the attendance of training and development, purchasing of professional texts for staff, and additional release days for teachers to work on elements of the site's planning cycle	All children made progress towards the EYLF Outcomes and the Preschool Numeracy and Literacy Indicators.
Inclusive Education Support Program	The site is supported by Department for Education funding to employ an ECW to implement additional support for children under the inclusive education support program, implementing individualised programs, additional support, and training. The Inclusive Preschool Program had 6 children enrolled in 2022 which is the full allocation of places for this program and was also supported with additional funding through IESP to support teaching and learning within this program. Other children in the mainstream were also supported through the IESP funding providing target wave 2 and 3 interventions to children identified as needing teaching and environmental interventions above and beyond quality differentiated teaching strategies.	Children receiving funding through the IESP progressed with individual and group goals. All IPP children achieved individual goals throughout the year.
Improved outcomes for non-English speaking children who received bilingual support	The site receives a small amount of funding for Bilingual Support. Acacia Kindergarten employed a Bilingual Support Worker to provide continued intensive English language learning support for our Bilingual children and New Arrivals children and families who enrolled throughout the year.	All children under the Bilingual Support Program have made progress towards EYLF Outcomes, their sense of belonging and involvement in their learning community.

\* The department's standard of educational achievement is defined as children and young people progressing and achieving at or above their appropriate year level.