Acacia
Kindergarten
Parent Information
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Early Childhood Workers: Kerry Walter, Sally Sellars
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Acacia Kindergarten Philosophy

Acacia Kindergarten strives to provide an enriching and nurturing, fun, playful learning environment that supports children’s social, emotional, intellectual, physical and creative growth. We aim to work in partnership with families, agencies and the wider community to provide an inclusive learning environment for our diverse kindergarten.

Values

Relationships, Respect, Responsibility

Vision

Children are nurtured to develop the skills and dispositions for life-long learning.
At Acacia Kindergarten we believe:

- Children are capable and competent learners.
- Children have the capacity and right to initiate and lead their own learning.
- Children are unique individuals.
- Children are to be given opportunities to develop empathy and respect for natural and living things.
- Children learn best through play.

We will provide children with experiences that are playful, high quality, engaging, challenging, experiential and responsive to emerging interests within a friendly and respectful learning environment.

Curriculum

Acacia Kindergarten’s curriculum is based on the National Early Years Learning Framework for children aged 0–5 years **Belonging, Being & Becoming**.

**BELONGING**: is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.

**BEING**: is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in one’s life and children need time to just ‘be’—time to play, time to discover, time to try new things and time to have fun.
BECOMING: is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they become.

The framework has 5 learning outcomes
1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

Dispositions for Learning
Dispositions are habits of mind that we develop. They are our ways of making sense of and acting in the world. Educators at Acacia focus on developing dispositions which we believe are important for effective, lifelong learning.

Curiosity: Children need lots of opportunities to explore and find things out. Curiosity is important for learning because curious children want to know more, are keen to make connections and follow ideas.

Confidence: Having a disposition of confidence helps children to try new things, take risks and explore, which are all important for learning. Feeling confident and having a positive sense of self-esteem are important for resilience.

Communicative: Communication is important for learning because being willing and able to listen to other points of view, or to ask questions and share their thinking helps children gather information.

Resourcefulness: Being resourceful is being able to respond to challenges and opportunities in lots of different ways. It is about being creative and being able to problem solve.

Cooperative: Cooperation is about working together respectfully and collaboratively with others. Being Cooperative is different from doing what you have been told, which is compliance.

Purposeful and Persistent: Children learn to be purposeful and persistent when they are encouraged to try new things, and to take reasonable risks. They learn that it is ok to make mistakes and to try again.
Children develop their dispositions from everyday interactions and experiences. Parents and educators have an important role in fostering these dispositions.

Our kindergarten is influenced by principles underpinning the Reggio Emilia approach to education which values children as capable, curious learners. We place importance on providing opportunities for children to make choices and direct their own learning. The daily program allows for long uninterrupted periods of play for children to explore, discover, create and imagine. Planned large and small group sessions occur during the day and are rich in literacy, mathematics, social skills, Child Protection Curriculum, and music and movement activities.

Children are encouraged to use higher order thinking skills and learning processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, and investigation. Children participate in collaborative learning projects in small groups and educators extend children’s interests and knowledge around current projects.

Early Literacy is a focus and at a preschool level this includes:

**Phonological awareness**—Rhyme, Alliteration (initial sounds in words), Syllables (beats in words)

**Oral Language**—building vocabulary, developing sentences using correct grammar, taking part in conversations, recounting events and telling stories.

**Print awareness**—experimenting with print (writing), understanding pictures and symbols convey meaning, recognising sounds and letters, demonstrating early reading skills.

At Acacia we encourage children to be *naturally creative* in their play, using items from nature as open ended resources to challenge and stimulate children’s thinking. We believe all children have the right to experience and enjoy being outdoors, allowing them to be in real contact with the elements, seasons, a range of sensations and
environments, uncertainty, surprise and excitement. Please refer to our sustainability strategy for more information.

Children at Acacia Kindergarten have the opportunity to participate in taking supervised risks, such as climbing trees, cooking on campfires and going on community walks. We believe that through these experiences children are able to learn how to assess risk for themselves as well as build confidence and self-awareness.

**Documentation of learning:**
Throughout your child’s year at kindergarten staff document children’s learning both formally and informally. We believe it is important for children, staff and families to reflect, revisit and value children’s learning journeys as a means of remembering the discovery process and communicating the learning experiences at kindy.

We have many ways in which we document children’s learning including photographs, video recordings, children’s symbolic representations of ideas (paintings, writing, drawings), learning stories, learning displays, portfolio folders, Learning summaries of children progress are written at the end of each term and a summative report is written at the end of a child’s kindergarten year. Parents are always welcome to meet with educators to discuss your child’s learning.

**Services Offered**

**Playgroup**
Playgroup is run at the kindergarten on Friday mornings between 9:30–11:30am for children 0–5 years. Parents supervise and play with their own children and have the opportunity to meet other families. We ask that you become a member of the Playgroup Association as this provides you with insurance cover.

**Cost per session $5:00 per family**

**Kindergarten**

ENROLMENTS
At Acacia Kindergarten, children are eligible to attend 5 sessions per week, which totals 15 hours per week. We try our best to book children’s sessions to work in with family needs. Most children attend 2 full days and 1 half day.

**KINDY SESSION TIMES**

- **Monday – Thursday**
  - *Morning* 9:00am – 12:00pm
  - *Afternoon* 12:00pm – 3:00pm
- **Friday** 9:00am – 12:00pm (when enrolment numbers are high)

*A full day equals 2 sessions. Children have lunch with staff. There is no extra lunch care fee.*

**KINDERGARTEN FEES**

* $100.00 per term

You will receive an invoice in your child’s kindy pocket in Week 1 of the term. Please see the Director if you are having difficulty meeting fee payments. The kindy is funded partly through DECD, fundraising and fees. Fees go towards running costs of the site and allow us to purchase resources for your child to use. Fees can be paid in advance or in weekly instalments of $10 per week.

**BEFORE KINDY CARE**

Care is available to families who work or study from 8:30am. Bookings are essential. Please see the Director for more information.

* $5:00 per session to be paid prior or on the day.

**MONEY**

Please put all money for the Kindergarten in a sealed envelope CLEARLY LABELLED with your child’s name, the amount enclosed and payment details (fees, fundraising, excursion etc). Place the envelope in the Fees Box near the front entrance. Please ensure you put EXACT MONEY in the envelope as change is not kept on site. You will be issued a receipt which will be placed in your child’s kindy pocket.
Alternatively you may wish to pay fees directly into our bank account by Direct Deposit. If paying by Direct Deposit, please put a copy of your receipt in the Fees Box

Acacia Kindergarten
Bank of SA
BSB: 105 002
Account Number: 119153340

Please put your child’s name as the reference.

INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
Acacia Kindergarten, as part of the Inclusive Preschool Program (IPP), provides a specialist program for children eligible to access full time kindergarten, who have significant global development delay, including cognitive delays. Educators work in collaboration with support services and therapists such as DECD, Community Health, Novita, Autism SA to provide an individualised learning program for these children. Children must be referred and meet specific criteria to enrol in this specialised program. Inclusive Directions also run an Inclusive Playgroup on Friday mornings which coincides with the kindergarten playgroup session.

What to bring to kindy?

- A bag for children’s belongings
- A change of clothes
- A wide brimmed or legionnaire style sun hat and applied sunscreen during Terms 1 & 4.
- A drink bottle, filled with WATER ONLY
- A piece or fruit or vegetable for each session
- A packed healthy lunch (if staying all day).

Make use all items are clearly named.

Please refrain from sending lollies, chocolate, chips, bars and other processed foods. As early childhood educators, we are concerned with the health and welfare of young children. We will encourage children to develop awareness about food that is nutritious. As we are
environmentally aware, please pack food in **reusable containers** (no glad wrap, glad bags, wrappers etc.)

Please note that Acacia is a ‘**NUT AWARE**” Kindergarten.

We ask that you send foods which are nut free.

**What to wear to kindy?**

- Please send your child in **sensible, comfortable and washable clothing** that they can manage independently (for toileting, dressing).

- **Old clothes are best** so that children can participate in messy and outdoor learning activities without fear of getting dirty. Make sure there is at least one **change of clothes** in their bag!

- Children should be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and with elbow length sleeves and longer style shorts. **Short dresses and tops with thin straps are not appropriate.**

- On cooler days, please dress your child in **warm clothing**, an extra jacket and beanie to keep them warm. We are still outside even if it is cold, windy and wet!

- Families are asked to **apply sunscreen** on their child before arriving **at kindergarten** in Terms 1 and 4. Staff will re-apply sunscreen late morning and mid-afternoon. The site will supply sunscreen, but parents may supply their children with their own sunscreen if they wish to use a particular type.

- During Terms 1 & 4, all children and adults must **wear a hat while playing outside**. Please provide your child with a named broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hat.

**SHOES**

- Please ensure your child is wearing **sensible supportive shoes** that are suitable for running and climbing. Thongs and open sandals are not suitable.
• During winter, children are encouraged to bring **rubber boots** so their feet stay dry while outdoors.

Acacia Kindergarten Clothes

Available at Mt Gambier Safety Supplies

118 Penola Rd
Mt Gambier

There are a range of polo tops, t-shirts, jumpers, jackets and hats available for purchase.

Please see the sample on display at the front entrance.

Please ensure all belongings are clearly NAMED

“**There is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing.**”

Ilnesses and Medication

If your child is unwell, it is in their and others best interest to remain at home until fully recovered. This will help stop the spread of infection. Please let staff know if your child has an infectious illness and/or if your child is going to be absent by phoning the kindergarten.

A form signed by the parent must be completed before staff can administer any medication. We can only administer prescription medication from its original container. Medication must be stored in the kitchen.
Please ensure staff are aware of any allergies or medication conditions your child may have. This information needs to be on their enrolment form. It is very important for staff to have up to date information on all children with Asthma or allergies (this may include a written plan from the Doctor) to ensure we are able to care for these children in the best possible way.

**Staffing for kindergarten is calculated on ATTENDANCE not on ENROLMENT.** Therefore it is vital that your child **attends sessions on a regular basis.** Regular attendance helps children to establish a routine that makes them comfortable and secure.

**Arriving at Kindy**

Please encourage your child to place their drink bottle in a drink basket and lunchbox in the dining room. Before 9am, educators are busy planning and preparing for children’s learning. Please do not come too early as this interrupts educators’ preparation time. There is a **SIGN IN SHEET** on a table at the front entrance. Please encourage your child to find their name, and then try and have a go at writing their own name. Please record who will be picking your child up that day. This is an important safety precaution as we can ensure who is collecting your child.

At times, children have difficulties transitioning between home/parent and kindy. Please be positive and speak positively in front of your child. Reassure them that they will be ok and bring them consistently to kindy. Often it helps if an educator can involve your child in an activity while you leave. When you say you are going, do not hesitate as waiting will often increase children’s anxiety levels. Please let staff know if you need assistance in supporting your child to separate at any time.

**End of Session**
Please collect your child promptly at the end of each session. Children will be in group time at the end of every session. You are welcome to come in and watch quietly. We expect children to remain seated until we have said goodbye individually to them. We encourage them to make eye contact, and reply by saying ‘goodbye’ before they leave. Your support of this social skill would be appreciated. Please ring if you are unable to collect your child on time. Please remember to sign your child out before you leave.

You can park along Bailey Street or use the school car park located on Wimmera Street and enjoy the walk through the Land Care garden. Please do not use the school or kindy staff car park. Only children enrolled in the Inclusive Preschool Program are able to use the disabled car park.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU SIGN YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT

Parent Involvement
Parents and caregivers are encouraged to participate at the Kindergarten in whatever capacity they feel comfortable. Some examples of how you can become involved are:

- Working with small groups of children and joining us on excursions.
- Cleaning tables, washing dishes and tidying resources at the end of sessions.
- Participating at working bees and helping at fundraising events.
- Taking washing home.
- Becoming a regular volunteer.
- Becoming a member of the Governing Council.
- Bringing in interesting materials, resources, recycled goods for us to use!

Children feel proud and connected when they can see their families joining in and helping at their kindy.
We welcome your ideas and support in any way. All volunteers are required to have a criminal history check and this can be organised through the kindergarten.

GOVERNING COUNCIL

You are invited to join our parent committee and together with other parents and staff, take up the opportunity to discuss the learning program, improvement plans, policies, budgets, special events, fundraising, and the general development of the centre, building and grounds.

Meetings are usually held in Week 3 & 8 of each term in the evening.

Communication

- Each child has a kindy pocket where newsletters, invoices, and other notes go in. Please check your child’s pocket frequently.
- Important information is regularly displayed on windows and notice boards.
- Feedback is always welcome. Please place any feedback in the Fees Box or speak to the Director.
- The beginning and end of the day are busy times for all educators and children. If you wish to speak to an educator, please wait until they are free or make an appointment.

Special Services

We have available to us a team of DECD specialists. They specialise in the areas of child development, including disability coordinators, speech pathologists, hearing impairment coordinators, psychologists, social workers and behaviour support coordinators. Should you have any concerns about your child’s development, please see the Director. Children who are identified as needing extra support can be referred to these specialists. Children who are eligible are then entitled to extra support time.
Policies
As a site we have specific site based policies and procedures which are in our policy handbook. You can view DECD policies that can be located at:


Thank you for enrolling your child at Acacia Kindergarten. We hope your time with us is enjoyable for you and your child.

If you have any concerns or queries, please speak to the Director.