



# 2016 Parent Handbook

# Acacia Kindergarten

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**Preschool Director:** Kimberley Crowe

**Teachers:** Susan Lightbody and Kath Salmon  
**Inclusive Preschool Program Teacher:** Tania Widdison

**Early Childhood Workers:** Kerry Walter, Sally Sellars and Mel Box  
**Preschool Support Worker:** Belinda Smith



**Our Values:** Relationships, Respect, Responsibility

**Our Vision:** Children are nurtured to develop the skills and dispositions for life-long learning.

## Curriculum

Acacia Kindergarten's curriculum is based on the National *Early Years Learning Framework* for children aged 0-5years '**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 okay 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 routine 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.

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 Statement of Learning 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 throughout the year.

## **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 spend time 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**

Kindergarten is provided over a two week booking cycle, totalling 30 hours per fortnight. Children are booked in on a fortnightly roster, attending 2 days one week, 3 days the next week. Children attend 2 days from Monday to Thursday, and alternating Fridays. We try our best to book children's sessions to work in with family needs.

#### **KINDY SESSION TIMES**

**Monday - Friday  
9:00am – 3:00pm**

## 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 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.

### Kindergarten Fees

#### **\$120.00 per term**

You will receive an invoice in your child's communication pocket in Week 1 of each term. Fees go towards running costs of the site and allow us to purchase resources for your child to use. Fees can be paid per term or upfront for the year. Please speak to the Director if you are having difficulty meeting fee payments. **Fees include all excursions and performances attended during the year, there are no extra costs.**

#### **BEFORE and AFTER KINDY CARE**

Care is available to families who work or study from 8:30am, and after session from 3:00pm. 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. Place the envelope in the Fees Box near the front entrance. 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.*

### 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 of fruit or vegetable for each session
- A packed **healthy lunch** (if staying all day).

**Make sure all items are clearly named.**

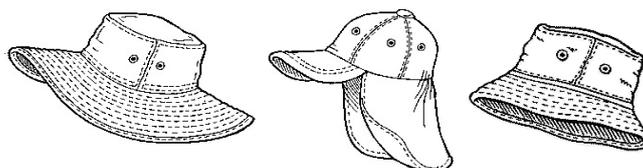
**Please refrain from sending lollies, chocolate, chips, bars and other processed foods.** As early childhood educators, we are concerned with the health and welfare of young children. We will encourage children to develop awareness about food that is nutritious.

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 for active play.
- 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 ensure all belongings are clearly NAMED**

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

## Illness and Medication

If your child is unwell, it is in their and others best interests 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.

## Arrival and Departure

### Arriving at Kindy

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. Please encourage your child to place their drink bottle in a drink basket and lunchbox in the dining room.

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. All volunteers are required to have a Criminal History Check and undertake Responding to Abuse and Neglect training. This can be organised through the kindergarten.

Some examples of how you can become involved are:

- Joining us on excursions.
- Participating at working bees.
- Becoming a regular volunteer.
- Becoming a member of the Governing Council.
- Bringing in interesting materials, resources, recycled goods for us to use!

### 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.
- 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.
- Newsletters and our Community Learning document are emailed to families weekly.
- Follow our Facebook page to updates and reminders.

## Special Services

We have available to us a team of DECD specialists. They specialise in the areas of child development, including special educators, 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 while at kindergarten.

## 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:

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/childrensservices/pages/earlychildhoodreform/PoliciesandProcedures/>

**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.**