Rose Park Preschool
Director’s Report
2010
Rose Park Preschool is a small full time kindergarten with between 50 and 60 enrolments, located in the Burnside City Council District.

We provide sessional pre-school and a full day program with up to 17 children staying for lunch care daily, enabling children to access their kindergarten entitlement of 4 sessions per week.

We have a close relationship with Adelaide Eastern Child Care Centre and in conjunction with AECCC, can provide excellent flexibility for working families, enabling eligible children to access a DECS pre-school programme daily with care at both ends of the day when necessary. A trial for children seeking after kindy care that do not ordinarily attend AECCC has commenced in 4th term at AECCC through a joint arrangement.

Staffing for 2010 consisted of 1 full time staff and several part time staff as follows:

**Elle Riessen**
Director 0.4/Teacher 0.6 (Full time Director Term 4)

**Julie Phillips**
Director 0.6 (Long Service Leave Term 4)

**Sophie Bowden**
Teacher 0.4 (0.2 in Term 4)

**Olga Malandris**
Play Group 0.1 (Teacher 0.8 in Term 4)

**Antonia Lambrakis**
Early Childhood Worker 0.5

**Alison Williams**
Special Needs Support Worker 0.1

Several bilingual staff have been contracted short term to work with children in many language areas including Sinhalese, German, and Russian.

This has been a very cohesive and hard-working team.

Elle Riessen and Julie Phillips continued their partnership in 2010 following the job-sharing Leadership Trial of using two directors in 2009. The process has enabled our teacher Elle Riessen to continue to develop her skills in the leadership role. It has also allowed us to critically review our leadership and teaching programmes with one person in both roles. This extended to the opportunity to fill the leadership role in Julie Phillips’ absence during long service leave in Term 4 and allowed continuity on site. By utilising each staff member’s strengths we have been able to assist children’s learning and improve wellbeing.

In 2010 we made a site commitment to participate in the Department of Education and Children’s Services Improvement and Accountability Framework Validation Process. This process is a site requirement by 2013 and supports preschools in sustaining high performance. It articulates the way in which our Preschool, Community, District and State Office work together continuously to improve progress and practices. Through reviewing our practices and establishing new systems, we have developed staff relationships and team practices which in turn enabled improved learning outcomes for children.

During the year we had a student from the University of South Australia who brought new ideas and shared the latest researched teaching and learning methods to the centre.

In 2010 we have experienced the excitement of our new learning rich resource, the food sensory discovery garden, affectionately dubbed “The Patch”. After the successful negotiation with Burnside Council over the use of the substantial plot of land, this has brought a vibrant learning environment to Rose Park Preschool where children articulate their pride, involvement and understanding of the learning provided, along with creating participation, generosity and engagement with the community to support the learning of the children.
Highlights
The Patch Discovery and Sensory Garden, a rich learning environment, where produce is grown by the children and sold to parents and the public.

Discovery what makes our bodies work including how to keep fit, dissecting brains, making skeletons and finding our heart beats.

Father’s Day Breakfast where fathers’ bring their child to preschool for breakfast and join in a variety of organised activities showing Dad’s our Preschool learning experiences.

A visit from the Drumming Monkeys where a celebration of musical antics takes place with both sessional groups together at kindy all at one time.

Making a mosaic mural for The Patch piece by piece using clay tiles and ceramic tiles, to record the children’s ideas about what The Patch means to them.

Cooking with parents using produce from The Patch and making pasta from scratch to share together at snack time, using rich language, literacy and numeracy opportunities.
Priority 1: Improved learning outcomes in children’s confidence and involvement as learners particularly through the development of questioning techniques which support investigations, learning discoveries, enquiry and problem-solving.

WHAT WE DID

The ability to understand, use, create and know the purpose of different questions is essential for children. This allows them to participate in home and preschool/school based activities, as questioning is used to guide children in their learning everyday.

The Question Bag was developed as an integral part of bringing the children into a climate of question asking and answering techniques and levels. The Question Bag is given to each child from a checklist. The bag is taken home by the child and together with a parent they decide on an item to be placed in the bag and kept ‘secret’ from the other children on its return to preschool. At group time the children are encouraged to ask questions to establish clues and answers as to what has been placed in the bag. Listening to other children in the group guided the more quiet children in the process, and modelled the questioning techniques that provided answers.

Items chosen varied from toys and game gadgets to kitchen utensils, shells and torches. Some items were quite complex such as an egg frying ring and may not have been in the context of all children’s lives, yet the questions used enabled children to access enough clues to work out what the bagged item was.

During group times and collaborative group projects, teachers focussed on modelling and trying to incorporate questioning techniques that the children may use to support their investigations. Games, stories and songs which modelled questions and answers were utilised to demonstrate to the children how to ask questions. Children were asked to consider higher level questions that allowed them to find out answers more readily.

Data was recorded at these times on the children asking questions, how often they were asking questions and the level of questioning that they were achieving.

Further observations of individual children were made through the Respect, Reflect, Relate document and other portfolio records, as well as children using the microphone to interview other children.

The Question Tree was ‘planted’ at Preschool where children could pose questions about any issue with the help of their parents, teachers and caregivers to encourage them to ponder questions and find ways of finding out their answers.

The “You Can Do It” Programme was continued for its success at creating opportunities for children to feel more confident through using self talk particularly through the puppet ‘Connie Confidence’.

Levels of Questioning posters were displayed in easy access locations around the preschool to allow staff to be constantly aware of providing children opportunities to use the right questioning techniques and extend their learning (see Appendix 1).

Staff were given opportunities to familiarise and increase their skills and knowledge in questioning techniques through attending the Early Childhood Organisation Professional Development “Are You Listening” author Lisa Burman.
Targets
It was expected that there would be a 30% increase in children using questions to support their learning during group times and in 1 on 1 experiences. It was anticipated that there would be a 60% increase in children’s confidence to participate in group or individual conversations through questions.

What were the results?
All (100%) of children used the Question Bag with 97% of children regularly (two to three times a session) contributing to questions at level one or two from their second term at Preschool. Children who were regularly confident to ask level three or four questions by the end of their third term at Preschool were recorded at 27%. Only 3% of children did not contribute to questions during these group experiences.

There was a 34% increase in children using Level 1 & 2 Questions as a result of the strategies implemented.

Overall there was a 50% increase in children’s confidence to use questions at group time experiences. Although the target of 60% increase was not reached it is anticipated that quieter children confidence to use questions would take a longer period to gain. The unexpected high use of level 3 and 4 questions was significant.

Next Steps
The Question Bag has proven to be successful in encouraging not only questions but raising higher level questions so that children can experience success at finding answers to questions and highlighting the process. It is expected that as such a powerful tool toward inquiry learning that the use of the Question Bag will continue in 2011. Using the new take home literacy packs and encouraging children to ask questions about what the child has found out about these stories will provide an additional source of question opportunities for children and improve their learning outcomes particularly as confident and involved learners. Working with the “You Can Do It” Programme and particularly Connie Confidence may assist in raising the confidence of quieter children in asking and answering questions.

Summation
The Question Bag was found to be a powerful inquiry learning tool with children bringing their own adjuncts from home and sharing information with their peers, partaking in collaborative experiences and children assisting each other with their line of questions.

The process of questioning to assist learning was embedded in the daily experiences at preschool and encouraged with extension at home. The improvements made to children using questioning techniques to aid their learning outcomes through the use of the Question Bag has developed opportunities to bring in depth project experiences into the children’s preschool learning.
**Priority 2:** Improved learning outcomes for children through improving the collection of learning data as per the Eastern Adelaide Regional Improvement Plan.

**WHAT WE DID**
Staff introduced the new Belonging Being Becoming Early Years Learning Framework for Australia from the start of 2010. The framework conveys the highest expectations for all children’s learning from birth to five years and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following five Developmental Learning Outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity.

**Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

**Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners.

**Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators.

In documenting children’s learning development journey to date, data has been gathered from the children’s summative report prior to going to school along with observations and portfolio collections. This data has been collected in the above outcome areas. Our results have been determined using professional judgement and recorded observations.

In 2010 we introduced the use of a Skills Developed by the 2nd term of Preschool Report. This also used the Developmental Learning Outcomes indicated in the Belonging, Being and Becoming Framework and gave us a measure of distance travelled by children in their learning while at preschool and in doing so, improve learning outcomes for children. The introduction of this developmental continuum has given us SMART and particularly measureable data on children’s Learning Outcomes by indicating the growth on children’s Summative Report.

Staff shared the responsibility for gathering the various data of photographs, observations and portfolio collections. Portfolio records were structured each term to show growth or patterns of development in all areas. Systems of collection were accessible by all staff, visible to parents, consistent and incorporated the new curriculum outcomes from the Belonging Being Becoming Early Years Learning Framework. This enabled weekly review of data requiring collection for consistent reporting along with allowing staff to share children’s development with families on a regular basis.

**TARGETS**
It was expected that all (100%) of children would have consistent measurable pedagogical baseline data for their 12 months at preschool with the children exiting for school in Term 4 2010 being the first cohort of children to access this SMART data on learning outcomes.

**What were the results??**
All 100% children consistently have learning experiences documented in their portfolios each term that include writing, print awareness, numeracy skills including number recognition and one to one correspondence, learning stories and observations, shared group celebrations and photo stories. The data gathered from these collections have resulted in the following improved learning outcomes that are visible. All children have documented growth during their time at preschool. The following graphs indicate the level of development in the outcome areas at the 4th term of preschool.
Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Outcome 1: Strong Sense of Identity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Well developed</th>
<th>Developed</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>56.25</td>
<td>43.75</td>
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Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 5: Strong Sense of Wellbeing

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<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Well developed</th>
<th>Developed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81.25</td>
<td>18.75</td>
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Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 2: Confident and Involved Learners

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<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Well developed</th>
<th>Developed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
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The 4th term children exiting for school were the first group to have SMART data accessible to define the growth during their time at preschool. These children showed growth across all outcome areas with 100% of children going to school with well developed wellbeing. 85% of these children came to preschool with developed wellbeing and interestingly the other 15% of children came to preschool with just developing wellbeing.

All children gained confidence during preschool with 73% that came with developed confidence going to school with well developed confidence, and of the remaining 27% coming to preschool...
with just developing confidence, 19% going to school with developed confidence, and 8% with well developed confidence.

53% of 4th term children when they entered preschool came with just developing identity, all going to school with developed identity. Interestingly another 4% of children that came with just developing identity left with well developed identity. 42% of children who came with a developed sense of identity left with a well developed sense of identity.

Although 85% of children came to preschool as developed communicators, all of these children became well developed communicators prior to school. Another 15% of children who started preschool as just developing communicators all became developed communicators prior to leaving for school.

Of the 100% of children coming to preschool with a developed connection to the world all went to school with a well developed connection to the world.
**Next steps**
Using the DECS Improvement and Accountability Framework process the current reporting on children’s learning outcomes will continue to be reviewed and modified to ensure that learning outcomes of every child will continually improve through the provision of SMART data. Each term’s exiting group in 2011 will show the growth pattern of improvements in learning outcomes as per the Belonging Being Becoming Early Years Learning Framework and thus indicate where improvements need to be made.

**Summation**
The DECS Improvement and Accountability Framework process has enabled critical and constant review of the learning outcomes of children at this site. With visible developmental continuum data available to both staff, families and community including feeder schools and the Department of Education and Children’s Services, individual children’s learning development and later, patterns of growth within the site can be established and shared to ensure continually improvement.
Appendices 1
Levels of Questioning Posters. These were used by teachers/staff to guide children and collect data on Question Levels being used by children.