



Lobethal Community Kindergarten Annual Report 2015

*Connecting and Learning
Together Through Nature*



"Children are born with a sense of wonder and an affinity for Nature. Properly cultivated, these values can mature into ecological literacy, and eventually into sustainable patterns of living."

Zenobia Barlow, "Confluence of Streams"

INTRODUCTION

2015 has been a ground breaking year. We went places never gone before, experienced learning that surpassed our expectations and built relationships that were strong, authentic and based on trust and mutual respect. It was a year that was full of challenges and rewards for effort. It was essentially, a year all about connections- Connections with each other, our friends and our environment. Through this report, I will highlight and celebrate all of the amazing learning that happened at Lobethal Kindergarten and beyond in 2015. I will also forward recommendations to be considered in our 2016 planning and improvement process.

LOBETHAL KINDERGARTEN STAFF 2015

Name	Role	Fraction of time
Lee Munn	Director	1.0
Katie Taylor	Teacher Term 1	1.0
Nell Ward	Teacher Terms 2,3,4	1.0
Janice Jenkin	Early Childhood Worker (ECW)	0.8
Nic Wood	ECW and Preschool Support & Lunch Care- Playgroup coordinator Terms 1-3	8-10 hrs p/w
Vanessa Curry	Finance Officer	4 hrs p/w
Jemma Hicks	Volunteer	Average 1 day per week

Although we faced some challenges with staff changes in 2015, our staff team remained a cohesive and focus team. Unfortunately, Katie left our team to go and work in Flinders Street Office at the end of term 1 then took leave for the remainder of the year before being placed elsewhere in term 4. Luckily, we had Nell available to step into her position, which helped all stakeholders with continuity of staffing. Nell also travelled with us to New Zealand and had already been a part of our QIP development and Nature Connect priorities. A special thank you goes to the lovely, Jemma Hicks who gave up countless hours of her time to come and play, build relationships and experience play at its best. We truly loved sharing so many precious and memorable learning moments with you.

GOVERNING COUNCIL 2015

Name	Role
Ali Moylan	Chairperson
Pippa Gill-Donald	Vice-Chairperson
Alida Cosgriff	Treasurer
Michelle Jones	Secretary
Jacci Parsons	Committee Member
Julia Cooper	Committee Member
David Hartas	Committee Member
Melissa Hein	Committee Member
Vanessa Curry	Finance Officer
Katie Taylor	Staff Rep (Term 1)
Nell Ward	Staff Rep (Terms 2, 3 & 4)

As a staff team, we would like to acknowledge the hard work of the 2015 Governing Council and thank them for their efforts and dedication to our kindergarten. Their hard work, great sense of fun and unwavering support of our kindergarten and all that we do has been invaluable to us all. Thank you for advocating, supporting and believing in what we do.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our community connections in 2015 were strong and stretched out past the Lobethal area. We connected with our local schools, heading to Lobethal Primary to share in their Harmony Day celebrations in term 1 which was a real highlight. Lobethal primary school also visited us throughout the year and even came out to Bush Kindy, where we both participated in the "Music, Count Us in!" program and transition visits. We were invited to Springhead Lutheran School on numerous occasions and were provided with their bus which added lots of excitement to our program. We participated in a range of dance and dramatic arts experiences, along with a session with visiting animals. The children and staff truly appreciated and enjoyed our visits over the year. We visited Lobethal Lutheran School on numerous occasions also and they continued their termly visits to us.

We also connected with local businesses and events, visiting the Lobethal Post Office, Newsagent, Kloses Foodland, the Mill Museum and engaging in wool based craft activities at the Woollen Mills SALA exhibition. We also reconnected with our lovely friends at Restvale, visiting them on numerous occasions and sharing stories and songs.

We established and built strong connections with our local service groups and council, through our Nature Connect Pilot Program. The Onkaparinga Lions Club donated \$500 and Rotary donated \$1000 towards our pilot program. As a result, we were invited to present at the Lobethal Hotel, sharing with the club our nature connect vision and findings. We also connected with Forestry SA through a member of our parent group and held our excursion at The Old School House at Mt Crawford Forest. We had visits from local CFS crews, and multiple visits from the Police car, (once again thanks to our talented kindy parents). We also had Tammy Pahl, one of our past kindy parents, come and run yoga sessions with the children once a week in term 2.

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Beach Excursion Term 1



Forest Kindy Term 2



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

SALA Exhibition and Mill Experience



Museum and Botanic Gardens Excursion Term 3



Community Connections



NATURE CONNECT

I preface this write up with the plain and simple fact that this is a brief summary of the Nature Connect program. I could (and we plan to) write a report longer than this entire report on our experiences and findings.

In September and October 2014, the Lobethal Kindy staff team presented two conferences to over 220 educators from across the state, sharing with them our nature story. With the funds raised, we wanted to engage in staff development, so it was decided that our staff team would travel to Te Anau in New Zealand to participate in the Reggio Emilia Nature Pedagogy Conference. We all took so much from the conference and the experiences of being in and around such beautiful nature that we knew it had lit a flame in us that we couldn't dream of extinguishing. We returned aiming high and dreaming big. We explored three major questions...

1. What does quality early childhood education look like?
2. What does this look like for us in our context?
3. What is our UTOPIA- If there were no limits, what would kindy look like for us?

Our answers led us to the same obvious and exciting conclusion. It was time for us to spread our wings, take all that we had learned from our past experiences and take kindy off site. This was a huge job, Nic Wood and Janice Jenkin led the charge, contacting service clubs and groups, negotiating with the council to use Bushland park as our kindy away from kindy. After all the logistics were complete, it was full steam ahead to plan what this might look like. We called our adventure... 'Nature Connect' and decided that it would be a pilot program and we even designed a logo for the program with the children. We wanted to collect lots of information and data and see how viable this type of program is in our setting. We decided on a launch week of outdoor kindy, then each group would attend once a week, meaning that each child would spend one day a fortnight at bushland park- at bush kindy. Risk assessments were conducted, handbooks created, suitable clothing and backpacks, tools, binoculars, compasses, sketch pads were purchased. We were all so excited but none of us really knew what to expect. To say we were blown away, would be a massive understatement. The children took to the whole experience like ducks to water and we allowed them to lead us and took on the role of facilitating their learning. The learning was rich, authentic, meaningful, real; purposeful....I could go on and on. We all knew there was no way that we could fabricate or replicate the learning experiences these children were experiencing back at kindy. We saw children become confident risk takers- not all at once, but slowly, in their own time because, they had time. That I feel is the key to the success of the whole program...time. Time to revisit, to explore, to notice, to compare, to theorise, to challenge and time to just be. Another key aspect of the program was about parental support and involvement. Over 15 days that each child had the privilege of experiencing we never had less than 3 parents helping. In fact, our parent/family helpers totalled:

The data collected supports the program's success and viability. Attendance rates were consistently in the 90% range, which is quite a staggering number across the winter months.

We had a wide range of visitors come from far and wide to see the program in action. We even had a group of educators from the Philippines come and experience a day in the bush with us. We brought in experts to help us understand and learn more about the bush. Robin Coles walked us through the bush for many days; pointing out the cultural links that bushland park has to the Paramangk people. He also taught us about the different types of fungi and flora. He sparked our children's interest in fungus and helped them to stop and notice the little things. We also had Sophie Rogers from NRME spend a day with us, and Lynton Vonow, a member of "The Friends Of Bushland Park" group spent a day exploring the precious bushland with us.

How can I articulate the power of this program? It truly is hard to put into words. We saw each and every child's confidence; skills and sensory regulation improve dramatically. We saw children's wellbeing levels increase. We used the RRR resource to measure children's wellbeing and their dispositions in both the kindy and bush settings. The results weren't surprising to us; they just confirmed what we already knew. Children were happier and more confident in the bush. Kindy average wellbeing scale score: **4.2 out of a possible 5**, Nature Connect average Wellbeing score: **4.9 out of a possible 5**. Quite astounding results, that were replicated almost exactly when we repeated them in term 3.

The feedback received from our children was positive. They could all articulate what they learnt and what their special memories were and why. Parent feedback was overwhelming. We had a 100% response rate to our survey, with **all** parents identifying the learning experiences that occurred in the bush. Parent responses on other forums such as our Facebook group and Blog were also overwhelmingly positive.

Feedback from a helping parent: *"The thing I loved the most about it was that it was just kids being kids, unconstrained by adult ideas about what play is. They are so naturally curious, both about the environment and what they are capable of. I loved how they went from looking at the big picture earlier in the day, to taking more notice of the smaller things as the day progressed."*Jac

"What an amazing experience for not only the children but for the adults as well. I absolutely loved helping out on the day and watching the children explore and enjoy nature. It was great to see kids in an amazing environment. I think we sometimes get caught up in the busy hustle and bustle and of our lives but to be able to take a step back and take the time out with our children to explore what's on our door step is one of the best experiences a child could have." Serena

NATURE CONNECT

"I had a wonderful day hanging out with the children and watching them explore, discover and work through the rush of excitement and/or nerves and/or reservations of their first bush kindy day. It was magical to see the bush alive with children free to connect with the environment around them. To quote Finn, upon seeing a mushroom, "Whoa!! Guys!!! I just found nature!!!!" Ali

"As a child, one has that magical capacity to move among the many eras of the earth; to see the land as an animal does; to experience the sky from the perspective of a flower or a bee; to feel the earth quiver and breathe beneath us; to know a hundred different smells of mud and listen unself- consciously to the sighing of the trees."

Valerie Andrews, A Passion for this Earth



SITE PRIORITIES 2015

In line with our improvement cycle, at the commencement of each year we conducted a lengthy self-review assessment, looking at the 7 Quality Areas and 56 elements of the National Quality Standard.

We used our first pupil free day to do this. Through this process, we created our 2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Throughout this report, I will address each of the quality areas and the identified elements and report on the progress made as well as provide recommendations for 2016.

We looked at the focus areas we would like to explore to build educator capacity. As a staff team, we identified the areas below and aligned these with our personal professional development plans, staff development and research inquiry.

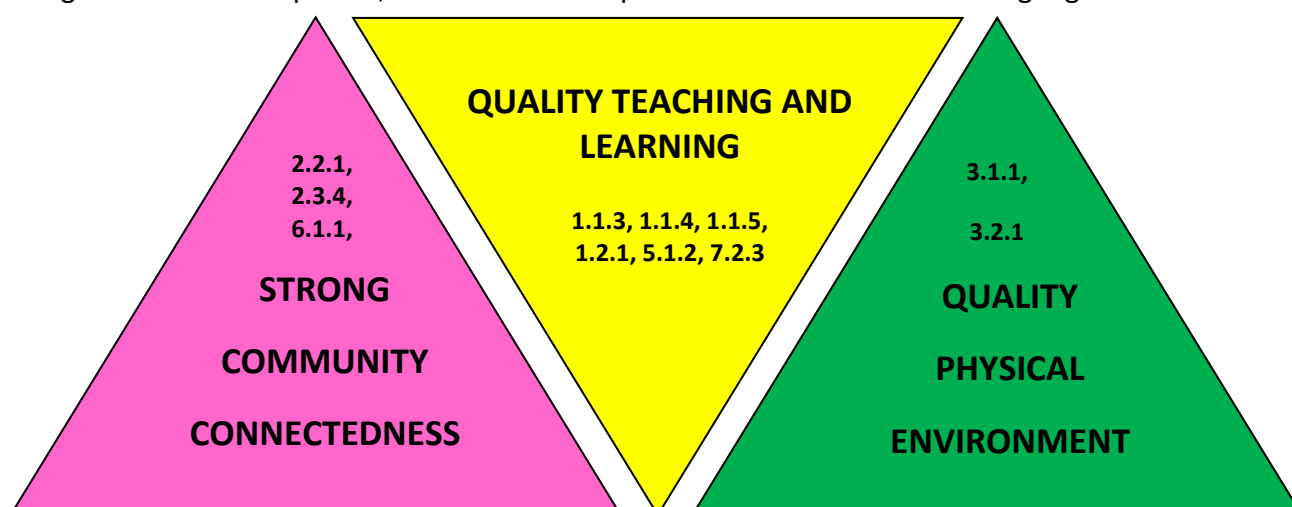


QIP Priorities:

Our overarching priority for 2015 was

“To provide high quality learning environments for all children at Lobethal Kindergarten.”

Through our QIP development, we clustered our priorities into three areas as highlighted below:



By doing this, it helped us as a staff team to see the interconnectedness of our work with the QIP priorities sitting within and supporting our overarching site priorities.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2015

Element: 1.2.1 Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting, and evaluating

Identified Issue: Due to higher enrolments and the implementation of the single intake, the current number of enrolments means that the 2014 quantity of assessment and reporting will not be realistic for 2015. Therefore, we need to create a clear and manageable planning cycle.

What outcome do we seek? The creation of a clear, concise planning cycle and assessment process that is manageable and provides quality, informative learning evidence in a range of ways.

2015 progress: As a staff team, we spent a considerable amount of time working on this planning cycle. We experimented with different elements and reviewed the effectiveness of each different process. At the end of 2015, after we had reviewed all that we tried, we created a simplistic, yet manageable cycle. The idea of our cycle is that it should be adaptable for cohort, whole group or intervention and individual child planning. Another important factor of this cycle is that it sits well within our site philosophy, pedagogy and image of the child.



Recommendations for 2016:

To continue using this planning cycle and review its effectiveness through termly and yearly self assessment processes.

Element 1.1.3 The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning

Identified Issue: In order to deliver the universal access 15 hours p/w to our families, we have had to start kindy at 8.20am and finish at 3.30pm. Our daily timetable and structure of the learning program needs to support our children's needs with these longer days.

What outcome do we seek?

A daily timetable that is inclusive of the needs of a range of learners and provides times for rest, physical activity and active play. It also includes opportunities for a range of different social and group experiences.

We would like to be inclusive of the needs of our families and our community, looking at neighbouring schools/centres pick up and drop off times.

2015 progress:

Our daily timetable was a fluid, child responsive approach to structuring our day around the needs of both the individual child and the group. Our timetable constantly changed through staff engaging in reflective practices, and became more complex as the needs and development of the group increased. As children's group time and listening skills increased, so too did our group times. Our rest and relaxation times also changed as the children became more adept at transitioning into and out of resting experiences. We used data collected from our research from Nature connect and adapted that into our daily program. The introduction of a morning movement session, or park run, allowed the children to get the opportunities to move, explore, play and connect in a range of ways in the park space (not playground) next door. The results of this were higher attention levels, increased participation in group conversations and longer times spent discussing learning plans and opportunities.

Recommendations for 2016:

To continue using daily, weekly and termly reflective practice to tailor our daily structure around the needs of our children.

Element 1.1.4 Documentation about each child's program is available to families

Identified Issue: The need to clearly articulate the learning that occurs for children in our setting and to enable us to show evidence of this in a range of ways.

What outcome do we seek?

To document children's learning in a range of ways to ensure that each child's learning program is visible to families, staff and to the child.

2015 Progress: Many changes and developments occurred in this space in 2015. We achieved the following:

- Created a closed facebook group for current families and staff
- created a social media policy, in line with the DECD policy
- Purchased 4 iPad Minis for the 'here and now' documentation
- Streamlined our use of floorbooks- merged four books into one.
- Created and shared a hard cover literacy publication for our community, exploring literacy connections in nature.
- Created a Rainbow of learning display for children and families, where broad goals were displayed, shared and constantly added to. Each arch of the rainbow represented a terms learning goal. These were added to portfolios and statements of learning

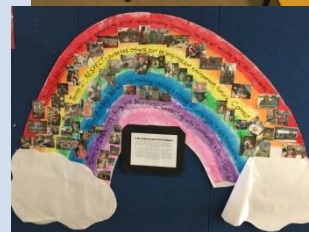
Parents were surveyed in term 4 2015 around the effectiveness of our documentation and correspondence. A staggering 100% of parents said they loved the use of the facebook group as it

helped them to see the learning on daily basis, which helped support their conversations and understanding of what happens in a kindy day.

"Loved the facebook group-immediate and visual. I loved reading and making comments. I check facebook regularly and love seeing updates from bush kindy" Jacci- Parent

"I loved seeing the photos-especially of moments captured that depicted personal growth"

Alison- Parent



Recommendations for 2016:

To continue our exploration of making quality documentation visible in a range of ways. We will continue to use our Facebook groups and endeavor to set up IT systems which will support our documentation processes. Resourcing may need to be considered for this in the 2016 budget.

Element 1.1.5 Every child is supported to participate in the program

Identified Issue: Larger numbers are providing a challenge to ensure that intervention processes are in place. We don't want children to slip through the system and not access the program to their full potential.

What outcome do we seek?

A clear process around identification and support for children requiring intervention

2015 Progress:

We created an intervention process which involved discussions around each child, every day and resulted in the use of screeners and a range of data collected to get a greater picture of each child's needs. Our process involved data collection, concerns identified and shared, investigated and acted upon as necessary. Essentially, we used the process of recognise, analyse and respond to needs of each child. In 2015, we identified children's strengths and challenges and worked with and consulted the child and families to create an Individual Learning Plan. The focus areas for children were then plan for, implemented and reviewed as part of our planning cycle.

Unfortunately, due to large numbers and staffing changes our "every child, everyday" initiative, wasn't supported with our engagement scale data collection. This has been reflected on by staff and seen as a priority for 2016

Recommendations for 2016:

Continue Intervention process and implement the "Every Child, Every Day" initiative.

Element 2.2.4 Healthy Eating is promoted and a range of foods and drinks provided by the service is nutritious and appropriate for each child

Identified Issue: Current data collected indicates a need to promote healthy eating to our children and families

What outcome do we seek?

Promotion of healthy eating and exercise with our kindy children and their families

2015 Progress: Introduction of three take-home puppets & healthy living play kits. These kits were created to promote healthy living through:

- Crunch Munch the Healthy Munching Crocodile- focus on healthy balanced foods and drinks, oral hygiene
- Albert the Active Ape- focus on active lifestyle
- Gen the Gentle Giraffe- focus on mindfulness, relaxation and yoga.

We also introduced our rainbow of healthy foods, where we explored food types and colours and created a rainbow chart to promote diversity of healthy snack colours brought to kindy for morning and afternoon snack times. This was also used as a numeracy project with daily tallies collected and whole group analysis of most, least and quantification of colours and types of foods.

We definitely saw the types of healthy foods brought to kindy increase after we started our rainbow food chart. All children participated in the program and it led to further learning experiences around healthy choices. The term 4 water bottle challenge came from discussions led from the aforementioned activities. The notion of the group working together and challenging each other to make healthy choices was certainly effective and saw us create group norms around healthy choices



Recommendations for 2016:

Continue using our take home puppets in 2016. Collect data in term 1 around healthy foods and choices and respond to the data accordingly.

Element 2.3.4 Educators, coordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect

Identified Issue: Induction of ALL volunteers in Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training

What outcome do we seek?

All staff and volunteers trained in their roles and responsibilities as mandated notifiers.

2015 progress: RAN volunteer training held at kindy for all parents, volunteers and members of our Governing Council on 19th March 2015.

Recommendations for 2016:

Offer training to new Governing Council members and families.

Element 3.1.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose

Identified Issue: Develop a child and staff "safe" nappy change environment that protects the privacy and dignity of the child and ensures safe work conditions for staff/adults

What outcome do we seek?

To develop a staff "safe" nappy change environment that protects the dignity of the child and ensures safe work conditions for staff and adults

2014 progress:

There has not been any progress in this area. I did bring it up when we had a visit from the compliance officers from DECD and the ERRCSB board. I was instructed to conduct a risk assessment on the associated risks of changing children would out a change table and continue to keep all documentation around our quest to have a change table installed.

2015 progress: We have conducted a risk assessment and placed this issue on our risk register. We created a nappy change procedure and presented it to GC in July 2015.

Element 3.1.1: Recommendations for 2016:

To continue to review and update our risk assessments and procedures around safe nappy changing environments and continue to document any progress or correspondence made in relation to the change area.

Element 3.2.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments

Identified Issue:

We have identified a need to organise the wide range of natural resources we have collected with our nature pedagogy. We would like these accessible to children and empower them to access the resources they need or would like to explore.

What outcome do we seek?

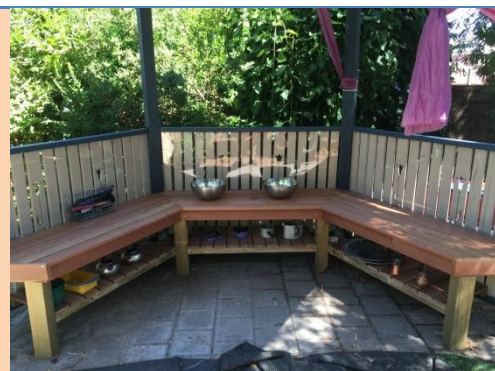
Children able to access a range of resources and materials to enhance their learning experiences and empower them as independent learners

2015 progress:

In February 2015, we placed a large order of shelving and storage boxes to be strategically positioned around the kindergarten to house our loose parts and resources that support our philosophy and nature based pedagogy. We spent: \$3755.75 of our budgeted \$4,000 and had parents and children help to assemble and position the furniture. This has been an extremely successful measure and has supported us to implement our program through the use and storage of materials and resources.

The shed build has been postponed due to a lack of funds along with the issues we have faced with our neighbour's cracked boundary wall at the rear of our property. We conducted a risk assessment and have placed risk management controls in place, meaning that the area near the shed and back wall cannot be accessed by children and staff. We are hoping that repairs will be carried out within the next few months.

We changed tack due to the funding and safety issues mentioned and decided to use funds received from our NRME grant of \$500 to create a mud kitchen in the existing gazebo. We worked with a local builder to design and construct our wonderful, sustainable kitchen play space. The total cost to the kindy was \$1160.00 The beauty of this space is that it is based and designed around what we know about our learning environment. Which areas are accessed, which materials and resources are available to promote a range of social and sensory play experiences. The result is an amazing play space that is rich in opportunities, promotes inclusivity and links in our sustainability and environmental priorities through the use of water caught from our gazebo (mud kitchen) roof and stored and accessed from our rainwater tank. Water and play materials are then put back into our adjoining sensory garden after use to help water the plants and nourish the soil.



Recommendations for 2016: We are hoping to continue our plans to draw up an accessible and affordable shed. We will work with our facilities manager to see how viable this is. We will also continue our quest to seek permanent storage for our Nature Connect boxes for bush kindy at Bushland park.

Element 5.1.2: Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.

Identified Issue:

In line with our 2015 FOCUS- "EVERY CHILD- EVERY DAY" We aim to ensure that each staff member has interactions or conversations about every child every day. This has come as a result of ensuring we still provide quality, nurturing learning environments with our larger enrolment numbers.

What outcome do we seek?

All staff to have meaningful relationships with all children and a deep understanding about each child as a learner.

2015 Progress: Previously addressed in Element 1.1.5

Recommendations for 2016:

To set up systems (Daily reflections, recording templates, resourcing, time management etc.) to ensure that the "EVERY CHILD-EVERY DAY" process will work. Systems supporting this will be crucial to its success.

Element 6.1.1: There is an effective orientation process for families

Identified Issue: Due to our large enrolments and limited capacity, we are unable to offer traditional pre entry as a transitional process for children starting kindy. We would like to use playgroup as a transitional experience for children starting kindy in the future 0-5 years.

What outcome do we seek?

Playgroup being an effective transitional experience for children and families. A way for children to transition physically and emotionally into kindy life as well as understanding the kindy philosophy and nature pedagogy from a young age.

2015 Progress: We employed Nicole Wood as our playgroup coordinator for terms 1, 2 and 3 to help promote the kindy nature based pedagogy and aid with transition and continuity of learning. Data collected suggested that the majority of the children accessing playgroup, were indeed current kindergarten children and the current playgroup cohort were successfully running the program with little help, so it was decided to cease the funding in term 4.

Recommendations for 2016:

Set up a shared playgroup committee to help promote the value of play and to promote and develop valuable social connections for new members of our community.

Element 6.3.2: Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.

Identified Issue:

As the demographic of our feeder schools change, we need to build and strengthen relationships to create a shared understanding of early childhood education and the needs of our children transitioning between kindy and school.

What outcome do we seek?

All staff to have meaningful relationships with all children and a deep understanding about each child as a learner.

2015 progress: As part of our DECD Torrens Valley Partnership, our staff engaged in the Professional Learning Committee around nature play and play based learning with early years educators from schools and preschools in our partnership. Further from this, we also participated in a closure day on June 30th, where we explored continuity of learning and transitions, links between the literacy and numeracy indicators, EYLF and the Australian Curriculum.

We held transition conversations with our four major feeder schools and assisted in information sharing to support effective transitions. We had two teachers come and visit us at Bushland park and hold their transition visit during a bush kindy session. This was a wonderful way to share the child's strengths and build relationships with each other in a neutral setting. We had a teacher comment on how they saw the child in both settings and saw a different side to that child in the bush that they wouldn't have otherwise seen in a traditional kindy visit. They saw the child as a capable, articulate and confident learner, something that was not as evident in their first visit to kindy.

We held a "Talking Transition" evening early in term 4 that was attended by principals and teachers from four of our main feeder schools. We had 32 parents attend and the feedback received from those who attended said it was a positive and informative session.

A first for us in 2015, was the alignment of our pre entry sessions to coincide with Lobethal Primary School transition visits on Mondays and Birdwood Primary transition dates on a Wednesday. By doing this, we could offer pre entry to our 2016 children without any additional spending or compromising our capacity restrictions.

Recommendations for 2016:

To use the 2015 experience as base model of transition with our local feeder schools.

Element: 7.2.3

An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place

Identified Issue: As part of a quest to share roles and responsibilities and build educator capacity, we aim to involve all educators in regular self review processes

What outcome do we seek?

Effective self review processes carried out by ALL staff members

2015 Progress: As a staff team, we devised ways to help more of our staff access and understand our QIP and NQS work. We accessed a QIP discussion record resource shared with us by Pam Lutze, our Early Childhood leader. We adapted this record and created a book that included our QIP and each of the expectations of the quality areas and elements. We have used this book to help build our understanding of expectations and document our journey in alignment with these areas. Staff have all borrowed the book and added their input into it as part of their ongoing professional development. It has also been a useful tool in end of term and year reviews and forward planning processes.

Recommendations for 2016: To continue this process and add to the discussion record by adding the 2016 QIP to the book.

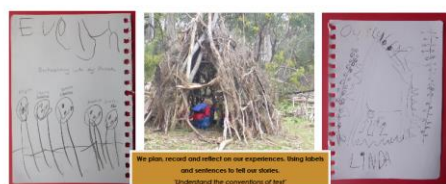
NUMERACY & LITERACY FOCUS 2015

As part of our work as educators, we engaged in a year of familiarizing ourselves with the DECD Literacy and Numeracy Indicators. This linked into the work we were doing within our Torrens Valley Partnership, Early Childhood Leaders PLC focusing on 21st century learning. As a group of educators, we explored the indicators, looking specifically at the learning processes in the numeracy indicators. Our inquiry led us to explore the relationship of neuroscience and brain development has on learning processes such as noticing, generalizing, patterning, wondering, communicating, reasoning, visualizing and comparing. We attended two professional development sessions held by Professor Martin Westwell, exploring the use and development of the executive functions (EF) of the brain and the effects it has on learning, and mathematics learning in particular. As a staff team, we explored the executive functions and experimented with ways we could introduce this learning into our everyday work with children. We looked at the three executive functions; cognitive flexibility, impulse control and working memory. We created some strategies to support children development of these areas and began using them in our interactions and whole site and individual child programming during term 4. We began using the idea of "hold that thought!" a way in which children had to use all three functions at group times when they had something they desperately wanted to tell us. This strategy was extremely successful. We saw lots of our children practising this skill and using it at group times. The key to the success was actually in ensuring that we returned to the child who was holding their thought, and still listening to more information and then commenting on how they used their brain to do more than 1 thing at time. To label their use of executive functions to support them to identify when they were doing so. Our experiences at bush kindy also helped to develop children's EFs through promoting impulse control through risk assessments, keeping safe, listening to our bodies, and through cognitive flexibility- expecting the unexpected and developing working memory- multitasking, playing, exploring, balancing etc.

We will certainly continue with our work on developing EFs in 2016 as we saw that the language supported children's ability to see themselves as learners and help them to organise their thinking to help them solve problems.

We also explored the Literacy indicators in arrange of ways. We used them in our documentation of children's learning and as a planning tool. We were asked in August to present at the state wide Literacy and Numeracy conference, sharing our story about literacy connections in nature. We took this opportunity to work at linking the Literacy Indicators to our experiences at bush kindy. We created large A3 posters showing how the literacy indicators aligned to our nature connect program. We also created a book, sharing our literacy experiences through stories that had occurred at bush kindy in 2015. We used an A-Z format and linked each experience to a letter of the alphabet. These strategies, publications and presentations helped us build our own understanding and capacity around the literacy and numeracy indicators. We look forward to continuing this learning in 2016.

Upon analysing children's statements of learning at the end of the year, 100% of students made significant gains in their literacy and numeracy development in 2015. We feel this is a result of intentionality, a targetted approach to developing the whole child through ILPs, family and child input into learning styles, interests and needs, bush kindy experiences and through the quality learning environments provided.



1: I represent my world symbolically



The Dead Kangaroo



During our first week of bush kindy, the bugs group discovered a strong wind as we were going for a run down the hill at bushland park. Upon further investigation, we discovered it was a dead kangaroo's carcass giving off the smell. The children spent a long time around the carcass, covering their noses from the stench. The children came up with theories around the how and why the kangaroo had died. Theories included "He was very old" Aida, "He had a heart attack" Ethan, and Eliah was sure that he was "bitten by a g-mousmous spider". Ethan and Aubrey had quite a long debate around the different paths of the kangaroo. Aubrey was sure that the kangaroo's tail was near it's legs, not up near where it's head should be, which was the opposite to Ethan's theory. You see, the head of the kangaroo was missing, which provided us with even more theories and wonderings to ponder during our future days in the bush.

We look forward to continuing our observations around the dead kangaroo in the coming weeks and months. We will watch it decompose and change and learn way more about kangaroos from this experience than we would ever learn from simply being told. This is the essence of the bush kindy experience for us.

Authentic, timely real learning experiences.

EVN:

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

Outcome 4 Children are confident and involved learners.



DATA ANALYSIS

Student Data

Enrolments

Figure 1: Enrolments by Term

Total Enrolments 2013 - 2015

Enrolment by Term			
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
2013	50	50	
2014	42	46	46
2015	56	55	55

Table 1: Enrolments by Term

Based on person counts in the two week reference period each term.
Excludes pre-entry.
Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

ANALYSIS:

- Over the three year period enrolments increased from 50 to 55 (increase of 9%)
- Highest enrolments occurred in term one of 2015
- Lowest enrolments occurred in term one of 2014

Attendance

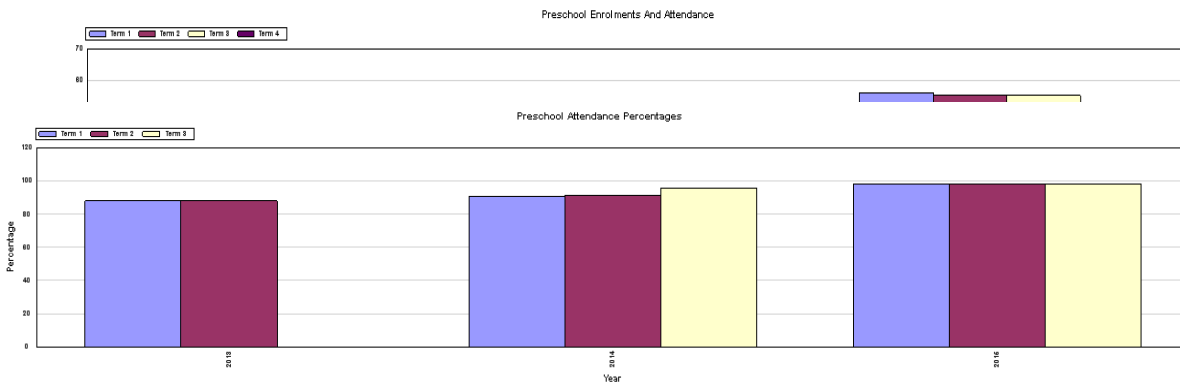


Table 2: Attendance Percentages 2013 - 2015

Attendance Percentage				
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2013 Centre	88.0	88.0		
2014 Centre	90.5	91.3	95.7	
2015 Centre	98.2	98.2	98.2	
2013 State	88.7	88.0		
2014 State	89.9	88.8	85.9	
2015 State	90.5	88.5	88.5	

ANALYSIS

Attendance percentages

- Attendance percentage was higher for the centre than the state average in both 2014 and 2015
- Attendance percentages in 2015 were significantly higher than the stage average. Year average for centre in 2015 was 98.2, year average for state was 89.16%
- The centre attendance percentage has increased during all three years from 88.0% in 2013 to 98.2% in 2015

Feeder School Percentage Data

5 Year: Feeder School Percentage Data 2011 – 2015

Feeder Schools						
Site number - Name	Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0107 - Crafers Primary School	Govt.		1.9			
0136 - Lenswood Primary School	Govt.	7.0	9.4	12.1	18.6	8.2
0204 - Kersbrook Primary School	Govt.	2.0	1.9			
0227 - Lobethal Primary School	Govt.	36.0	34.0	33.3	41.9	53.1
0296 - Mount Torrens Primary School	Govt.	5.0	7.5	6.1		
0495 - Woodside Primary School	Govt.		1.9		7.0	
0547 - Birdwood Primary School	Govt.	7.0	1.9	6.1	7.0	16.3
1051 - Ridgheaven Primary School	Govt.		1.9			
8007 - The Hills Christian Community School	Non-Govt.	5.0	5.7	3.0	2.3	2.0
8311 - St Aloysius College	Non-Govt.		1.9			
8420 - St Mark's Lutheran Primary School	Non-Govt.				2.3	
9046 - St Francis de Sales College	Non-Govt.			3.0		
9096 - St Michael's Lutheran Primary School	Non-Govt.			3.0		
9100 - Lobethal Lutheran School	Non-Govt.	23.0	22.6	27.3	14.0	14.3
9104 - Spring Head Trinity Lutheran PS	Non-Govt.	14.0	9.4	6.1	7.0	6.1
Total		99.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	100

ANALYSIS:

- Each year over the past five years the percentage of children enrolling in a government school has increased.
- The percentage of students enrolling in govt schools has increased from 57.0% in 2011 to 77.6% in 2015
- The percentage of students enrolling in non-govt schools have decreased each year from 2011-2015. This percentage of students has dropped from 42.0% in 2011 to 22.4% in 2015.
- 53.1% of students enrolled to attend Lobethal Primary school at the conclusion of 2015. This was the highest percentage achieved for a single school in the five year period.
- Percentage of students enrolling at Lobethal Primary school has increased during the five year period from 36.0% in 2011 to 53.1% in 2015.
- Percentage of students enrolling at Lobethal Lutheran School has decreased during the five year period from 23.0% in 2011 to 14.3% in 2015.

CONCLUSION

Wow, What a year of achieving and learning together! I would like to thank everyone who contributed to helping to make 2015 such a memorable and special year.

To our amazing staff team, thank you for your unwavering trust in me as a leader. The fact that you all just got on with the task of making a little dream sparked in a hall in Te Anau, New Zealand, a reality, still perplexes me. You all worked so many extra hours because you believed in the concept of bush kindy and nature pedagogy. You have all walked every step of our journey to the bush with me and I could never ask more of a staff team ever. You all brought your own unique skills and talents to the fore and just made it happen. If it wasn't real, I truly wouldn't believe it was achievable. Thank you. Thanks also to lovely Vanessa Curry (Ness) for her support and help with our finances in 2015. Ness' skills are exceptional and she has gone over and above her job description to ensure we never skip a beat. We are all so proud of her for completing her Diploma in children's services. What a star!

To our Governing Council members, what a fun and crazy year we had! Led by the extremely talented and exceptionally organised Ali Moylan, we were always destined for greatness! Thanks for sharing with us your time, effort and energy. We added two extra mini members to the kindy crew during the year in baby Violet and baby Lottie, so never a dull moment was had. Together you raised an exceptional amount of funds for the kindergarten and even more importantly, were strong advocates for quality education and our nature pedagogy. Thanks for your support in steering us toward achieving our dreams of creating bush kindy.

To our families-parents, grandparents and carers, Thank you all so much for your support and for allowing us to share in your child's precious learning journey. We certainly look at our job as a privilege to be working with, challenging and supporting the children of Lobethal. Thanks for your contributions and support of our kindy.

Lee Munn

Director



Lobethal Community Kindergarten AGM

Chairperson's Report | 2015

The start of each year at Lobethal Kindy is an exciting time, it is the beginning of a journey which promises to be full of adventure, friendships, challenges and always many, many laughs.

The 2015 Governing Council has been a brilliant mix of new faces and those who were coming back for more - a perfect blend of experience and fresh ideas.

As a team we worked hard on several successful fundraising events including an Easter raffle, a 'Popcorn & Playdough' stall, Bunnings sausage sizzle and a wine sale. On top of these we also organised our major fundraiser; the Kindy Quiz Night. This was a huge event which was well supported and attended by the community. Organising such a successful quiz night and other fundraising events was only possible with the time, effort and commitment from the Governing Council Members. The hard work paid off with our efforts being great fun and very profitable in raising funds for the kindy.

2015 saw the development of 'Nature Connect', an extension to 'Outdoor Kindy Week' and 'Bush Kindy' from previous years. It's been amazing to be a part of this initiative both as parents and Governing Council Members. With the development of this program we have built valuable relationships with the local council and the Onkaparinga Rotary Club. These reciprocal relationships have been mutually beneficial with the Rotary Club purchasing backpacks and jackets for Bush Kindy and, in return, we supported the club by volunteering at their Antiques Fair. Building and maintaining these links within the community gives the Kindergarten, and the children who attend, an important sense of being part of the wider community.

Meeting twice a term, the Governing Council also discuss, review and approve policies and procedures as well as being the highly valued voice of the parents and community members in decisions that need to be made. Being a part of these conversations gives members an insight into the work and consideration that goes into running the kindergarten. It is impossible to overstate how lucky we are to have such passionate, dedicated and innovative staff guiding our children on their learning journeys.

Being part of the Governing Council gives you the opportunity to truly appreciate, and support the incredible work of the staff team. Each member of staff is committed to ensuring that each individual child, as well as their family, feel a deep sense of belonging and is genuinely engaged and empowered by their kindy experience. For this I would like to take the opportunity to say 'thank you' to the staff on behalf of all the 2015 kindy families; your hard work and passion is what makes Lobethal Kindy so unique.

To my fellow Governing council members, also a massive 'thank you'! We've worked hard and had many laughs along the way. It's been a busy year but with good humour and a few late nights we 'graduated' from kindy with flying colours!

To the new families joining the kindy community, and those lucky enough to be returning - welcome and welcome back! I would encourage you to consider joining this year's Governing Council. Each one of you has valuable skills to contribute and an opportunity to be a part of an amazing team that supports this incredible kindy. There will be a lot of work to be done, a lot of fun to be had and brilliant friendships to be made. This truly is a *community* kindergarten where our children are at the centre of that community - engage in that journey.

On behalf of the 2015 Governing Council we'd like to welcome in the new members and hope you have as much fun as we have.