

2023

Quality Improvement Plan for Allenby Gardens Preschool

Site number:

1647



Service name

Allenby Gardens Preschool

Service address

Barham St. Allenby Gardens 5009

Service approval number

SE-00010124

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where our centre is located and recognise their continuing connection to country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples.

Service context

Allenby Gardens Preschool is a school-based preschool. As a school-based preschool, the site is managed by the leadership of the school. The enrolment capacity in 2022 was 66 with a floor capacity of 44.

Allenby Gardens is a diverse cultural community. Most adults are in full or part time employment. Approximately 20% of the families have English as an additional language, the largest group being of Indian background speaking Urdu or Punjabi. Many more children have extended family members who have English as an additional language.

The centre has been a part time centre, operating 4 days per week since it was established many years ago. Families were offered two and a half days per week or a 2 day/3 day alternating booking pattern. To manage this complexity, children were grouped within sessions for continuity of learning with an educator. There were systems for monitoring and tracking assessment and documentation and collaborative reflective processes also supported continuity of learning for each child.

In 2021, the centre had a significant change to the preschool staffing. A new Assistant Principal in Early Years began leading the team in Term 3. In 2022, 2 permanent preschool-based School Service Officers, returned to work in the preschool after having worked in the school for two years. Another School Service Officer was employed after a successful application for funds due to a child's special rights and a bilingual SSO was employed three hours per week in term 4 with funds from the Preschool Bilingual Program to support a child who spoke only Amharic.

In 2022 the centre had an active and enthusiastic Preschool Parent Committee. Seven parents met regularly to discuss issues related to the running of the centre and implications for future directions of early childhood services as presented in the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy.

In 2022, the site's improvement goal focussed on children's oral language development. This was chosen due to the high numbers of children who were identified by parents as experiencing difficulties with their speech and language. A review of at the end of 2022 showed that all children's oral language progressed, with most children demonstrating significant growth over the year. In 2023 the focus will be to improve inquiry learning with children and strengthen children's abilities to be co-researchers and build on each other's ideas and learning.

After a consultation process, the centre received approval to operate over five days each week from the beginning of 2023, making it a full-time centre. Children will access their 30 hours over two weeks by attending two full days of six and a half hours each week with an addition four hours on alternate Wednesdays. These new service hours will be reviewed in term 3, 2023. The sites enrolment cap for 2023 has been lowered to 55 with an expectation that this will be raised to accommodate the new midyear intake.

In Term 1, 2023 the preschool team will include:

- **Teachers;** one full time, one working at .6 and a third teacher at .4,
- **SSOs;** one full time, with the potential to employ additional SSOs as funding is approved.

Statement of Philosophy

Allenby Gardens Preschool: Our Philosophy Statement

At Allenby Gardens Preschool we acknowledge the Kurna people, the traditional owners of the land on which we learn. We pay respect to the Elders, past present and emerging.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool we create an environment that fosters strong and positive relationships as we know this supports children's learning and a sense of belonging. We believe children, educators and families do this through a sense joyful and curious playful learning. We build strong relationships with families and value their role as the child's first educators.

We believe through exploration and play children develop a strong social and emotional wellbeing essential for their future learning and development.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool we listen to and value the contribution of all families and support them to participate fully in the preschool program and access groups such as the preschool parent committee.

We foster positive relationships with the wider community including the school.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool educators take a holistic approach toward children's learning and development, are respectful of and recognise the rich potential of every child.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool children are active participants in their learning.

Children:

- Develop autonomy and independence and make choices and decisions about their learning.
- Become critical and creative thinkers and contribute to decision making and problem solving.
- Develop positive dispositions for learning toward becoming confident, resilient risk takers.
- Develop skills to form positive relationships.
- Build an understanding and respect for the natural environment.

Educators work collaboratively to:

- Provide an active learning environment that empowers children to become critical and creative thinkers.
- Respond to children's ideas, interests, and inquiries to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Create play spaces and stimulating experiences to engage children in open-ended learning.

Our approach is underpinned by the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the Belonging, Being and Becoming, Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework. We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The above philosophy statement was reviewed and approved by staff and parent community in November 2022.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) underpins the teaching and learning program at Allenby Gardens Preschool. The EYLF principles, practices and outcomes guide interactions and relationships with children, families, and the community. Educators engage purposefully with children in their play, using a range of strategies according to the needs of each child or group.

Children are seen as active participants in their learning. What children know, can do, and understand is monitored through several modes including, but not limited to written anecdotes, annotated photos, extended observations, and children's reflections. Together this data is used to contribute to high quality collaborative pedagogical documentation.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool pedagogical documentation is an embedded practice. In June 2022, weekly meetings replaced less frequent fortnightly meetings. The team meetings provide a structure for staff to actively engage in planning using many sources of information including family comments, children's interests, and educator observations. The learning design is driven by the learning and developmental needs of the children. Whole group times are kept very short and small groups are established to support specific areas of growth. Small group sessions are designed and implemented to allow each child the opportunity to engage and contribute their ideas and opinions. Assessment and documentation of children's learning is informed by observations and collaborative reflection with colleagues and families.

Morning check in meetings were introduced in 2022. This was considered necessary, because of the flexible nature of the booking system. Using this system meant that different children attended each day. The morning meeting allowed staff to go through the attendance list and discuss any immediate needs/interests that may be impacting a child's engagement in the preschool routines.

The site has a comprehensive planning wall visible to all families, staff, and children at the centre. Staff use a spreadsheet with children's names, to ensure all children are being observed, documented, and planned for and that they all appear in the pedagogical documentation. The planning cycle is visible and actively guides the learning design, reflective practice, and assessment. All staff are involved in active and intentional planning for the outdoor environment. Children have autonomy over where to play for most of the day. Children are active participants and have choice in their own learning. The learning is designed around children's interests and wonderings.

As a school-based preschool, the centre has very strong links with the school community. The children and staff use many of the school resources and are invited to be involved in incursions such as science presentations and school community events. The site also participates in a local council-initiated literacy program called Paint the West Side Read. The centre has strong links with other preschool sites through this literacy program, other partnership structures and the support of the Early Childhood Leader. Staff visit other sites and attend partnership meetings to support their professional development, to continually improve the educational program being offered. In 2023 an educational consultant will be involved in coaching conversations with the team twice each term to support quality improvement.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

The daily routine maximises choice for children to access indoor and outdoor environments. Children feel confident knowing they can move throughout the centre safely. The physical space inside allows for rest and relaxation (in the group room) for individual children, should they need it. In this space children can be safely supervised by the educator who is indoors. During lunch time all children are supervised inside, relaxing music is played and the lights in the centre are turned off to support relaxed eating. In 2022 mindfulness activities were included in group times to support relaxation and emotional regulation. Staff are responsive to children's needs and continuously monitor energy levels and emotional regulation.

Families were provided with information about healthy food guidelines for preschools. 2023 families have been given this information through the new Preschool Parent Handbook. Educators eat with children to role model appropriate eating behaviours and 1:1 support is provided to children experiencing eating difficulties. Staff collaborate closely with families to support children's positive eating experiences. Children are encouraged to sit in the best spot available to successfully eat their snack/lunch and parents are provided with feedback about children's eating. Healthy eating is promoted throughout the program as foods from the edible garden are used for cooking, eaten raw or sent home for use with families.

The centre has been well staffed, which has allowed for flexible movement of children both indoors and outdoors. Staff constantly monitor the number of children and adults within spaces and ask for assistance if necessary. If there are not many children inside, then the quiet/group room is closed off to assist with supervision of children in the main room and the veranda.

As the preschool is managed under Allenby Gardens Primary School, it is included in all site fire drills and evacuation drills. Prior to the official site drill the preschool staff will practice the procedure several times with children, to reduce any associated anxiety. For evacuations, the preschool children and staff go to the school oval. Drills are practiced every term, more frequently in term 1, The Emergency Contact Book, (hard copy) is easily accessed by all staff in case of an evacuation.

Staff are in constant communication with families to support children's healthy engagement with the preschool routines. Families with children who have additional health needs are called regularly by the educational leader to provide support, plan for the child's return to preschool and/or refer to support agencies.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Allenby Gardens preschool has a large outdoor space that provides many opportunities for children to create a wide range of play situations including both quiet and active play. Children have access and choice of outdoor or indoor spaces for extensive periods of time. Educators intentionally plan for both outdoor and indoor learning and ensure that the interests and needs of every child are catered for. Documentation and analysis of learning is balanced between indoor and outdoor environments which is reflected in our cycles of planning, communications with parents and children's portfolios.

All building fixtures are suitable, safe and the outdoor area is fit for purpose with the inclusion of some moving parts. Outdoor checks are performed daily to ensure all areas are safe. Indoor areas are also constantly monitored. Unsafe equipment or furniture is dealt with immediately to ensure a safe environment for all.

Spaces are flexible and intentionally planned and set up to support group collaboration and group learning. Staff actively document children's engagement in different areas and experiences and will intentionally change the environment to extend children's play/engagement. Resources are stored at child height so children can access these easily. All children are encouraged to ask for resources that are out of sight, perhaps in the storeroom or the shed. Children are also supported to pack up equipment as needed to keep environments safe.

The centre uses sustainable practices with children such as recycling, worm farming, gardening, and composting. The edible garden provides many learning opportunities for children as staff and children work together to maintain the edible plants. The preschool also has an additional garden bed in the school garden which is only accessed with an adult.

The centre also encourages 'nude lunches' where no waste is created. Paper usage and reuse is discussed with children regularly as part of art-based activities. Children are supported to re-cycle as much as possible.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
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Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

At Allenby Gardens Preschool all staff are qualified and involved in ongoing professional development. The school service officer (SSO) is a qualified early childhood teacher choosing to work as an SSO. Clear Timetables/roles ensure that families know who to go to for information/advice about their child. Teachers know who is responsible for supporting specific children/programs. In 2022 IESP grant funding was used to bring in additional support. Roles and responsibilities were redistributed as it became clear which children needed more support. This ensured that the most appropriate educator worked with children requiring specific support. In this way our team culture recognised each team member's strengths. In 2022, the centre was staffed above the ratio required by the Department for Education and ACECQA requirements.

At Allenby Gardens Preschool, only preferred regular early childhood authorised relief teachers are used to replace teachers during any absences. In 2022 non-face to face time for teachers was mostly provided by the Assistant Principal: Early Years. In 2023, teachers will be released for non-face to time by a third teacher employed for two days each week.

Morning check ins for 10 minutes each morning were introduced in 2022 to prioritise children's needs and collaborate about daily expectations. The morning check ins allowed all staff present to contribute equally to the daily focus and communications and ensured that relief staff are informed about children's individual needs. In addition, weekly team meetings were introduced at the request of staff. In 2023, morning, check ins will occur on Tuesday mornings only, because Tuesday will be the first day of the week when all staff will be present on site.

Staff are highly collaborative. The staff team began 2022 meeting fortnightly, but due to concerns that this did not enable enough collaborative, reflective practice, the team decided to meet more regularly. Weekly team meetings, introduced mid-year, created far more opportunities to share practice and engage in deeper collaborative reflection and planning. In 2023 weekly meetings are scheduled for Wednesday afternoons.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

At Allenby Gardens Preschool staff place a high value on developing relationships with children. Early in the year a hard copy Family Web is sent home and made into a book which children access all year. This provides unique information to staff about the significant people in each child's life. Children refer to these frequently throughout the year. Often sharing them with peers and staff. These are then photocopied and kept for future groups to access so that after the children leave, there is a legacy of their attendance in the centre.

Adults intentionally introduce children to each other when playing and purposefully support or expand friendships. Educators actively listen to children and build sustained shared thinking to support new relationships. The play-based planning allows educators to interact and engage with children through play often, throughout the day. The program is derived from children's interests, ideas, play and information from families.

Relationships go beyond a child's time in the preschool. Support is provided to children who have transitioned to school and have maintained strong relationships with preschool staff. In this way vulnerable children can continue to visit and engage with the preschool staff and preschool environment when they need to. The preschool staff's enthusiasm, respect and knowledge of children and children's strengths is reflected in the strengths-based approach used when designing learning and supporting children through transitions.

Staff respond to extreme emotions in children and adults in a positive way. Staff develop an inclusive curriculum which values cultural and religious diversity and recognises and acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which the centre is built. Educators plan collaboratively with families and service providers, both private and Departmental to enhance the learning of children who may have special rights and/or learning challenges.

The Deputy Principal facilitates a rebuilding of trust and confidence, when necessary, by meeting with the families to address any emotional concerns and create a plan to support the child and the family. This happened on several occasions in 2022 when families were having difficulties with the morning drop off. After creating a plan with families all staff were able to support the families and child through their unique challenges. Preschool staff actively work to support the strengthening of relationships between preschool children and their school siblings and friends. This might include allowing an older sibling into the preschool outdoor area to support their younger sibling. This supports the preschool child's sense of belonging and connectedness.

Within the educational programming and planning, small groups are specifically created to have a mixture of children to enhance the learning potential of the group and scaffold new relationships, to widen the child's network of secure relationships. During play, educators encourage new friendships as they initiate and welcome children to join in play situations. Educators use sustained shared thinking to support children's collaborative learning together through play.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

At Allenby Gardens Preschool, staff recognise that families are a child's first educators. Collaboration with families begins with the enrolment process. The Deputy Principal speaks with all enrolling families to ensure that Allenby Gardens Preschool can offer the service that the family needs. Families are offered a tour of the preschool and school and given a preschool information booklet. It is at this first contact that leadership staff begin to get to know families.

Staff work closely with families to quickly build relationships with children. A Family Web template, (mentioned above) is sent home early in the year and turned into a book which becomes a useful tool to support educators develop strong relationships with children and for children to build relationships with each other. This is an important tool for staff to learn about who the significant people are in each child's life. Parent questionnaires are also sent home early in the year to learn as much as possible about children early in their involvement with the preschool and the staff. Parents also have many opportunities through the Seesaw app to collaborate with staff about their children's development and relationships.

The morning routine is deliberately flexible to allow parents and staff to have conversations about children/families. It provides an informal opportunity to pass on information about children's needs. At the end of the day, staff are also available to pass on information about any child's day. During the day parents may be contacted if important information needs to be communicated in a timely manner, such as if the child has become upset or has needed a rest.

Social stories are developed with families to support a sense of belonging for children and for those who may need some support with transition to school. Collaboration with families is essential for children with special rights especially when there is the possibility of referrals to other agencies, such as the Department's support services or the Child Development Unit. Parents are also referred to parenting courses such as those offered at Gowrie SA or provided with resources such as those developed by Parenting SA.

Staff collaborate with community members to learn about significant cultural events such as Diwali. This informs the learning design, programming, and planning, resulting in many children developing a strong sense of connectedness to others in the community, as all staff and children learn about significant cultural events together. Through the local council, the centre has been involved in a literacy program to promote reading. Paint the Town Read is an early literacy movement. It encourages people to read with children. At Allenby Gardens Preschool families are encouraged to take home a lizard called Lizzie and write about her adventures while visiting the family. They are also encouraged to use the book swap created by staff. This program provides another strategy for building relationships with families and communities as Lizzie engages in many cultural events with children.

As a school-based preschool, the centre has strong links with the staff and facilities at the school and the broader school community through sports days, end of year concerts etc. Staff continue to maintain positive relationships with children and families who have transitioned to the school. Staff also collaborate with an active preschool parent committee to negotiate changes to the centre's operation, approve philosophy reviews and engage in shared decision making.

Strengths

With reference to the three exceeding themes:

1. Practice is embedded in service operations
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

As a school-based preschool, Allenby Gardens Preschool is managed under the leadership of Allenby Gardens Primary School, with the principal as the nominated supervisor. In 2023 the management of the preschool and the educational leadership of the preschool will be the responsibility of Deputy Principal. This includes planning and implementing professional learning for the preschool team and direct line management of all members of the team. The educational leader facilitates all team meetings/professional learning and supports staff with all aspects of preschool planning and operation.

The site philosophy was reviewed during term 3 and 4 of 2022. The philosophy was reviewed by staff, then presented to the Preschool Parent Committee on two occasions and feedback taken back to staff. The resulting draft was sent to all families via Seesaw as part of a newsletter. In 2023 the site's philosophy will be reviewed with the new staff members and the new cohort of families. Staff will strive to include children's voice and have more consultation with families about the preschool philosophy.

Decisions that influence the running of the preschool are discussed together at preschool team meetings and taken to leadership meetings and the Preschool Parent Committee as needed. Where necessary other leadership members are invited to preschool meetings to clarify ideas/concerns.

In 2022 teachers and educators were supported to attend many professional learning opportunities at the partnership level. This included a daylong conference on pedagogical documentation. Teachers were also supported to visit other sites to focus on ways to reflect on the centre's practices and procedures. In 2023 there will be some changes to the preschool team which will require clear guidelines of roles and responsibilities. As far as possible, staff rosters have been designed to maximize the number of staff at the weekly meetings on Wednesday afternoons.

In 2023, the Deputy Principal will lead the professional learning with support from teaching staff and collaboration with the Early Childhood Leader. Anthony Semann an early year's education consultant from Semann and Slattery has been engaged as an educational coach. He will meet with the preschool team online twice each term to support improvement in the site's pedagogical documentation and improvement agenda.

Learning Improvement Plan – Goal 1



STEP 1 Analyse and Prioritise

Site name: Allenby Gardens Preschool

Goal 1: To empower children as co-researchers and partners in the learning process.



STEP 2 Determine challenge of practice

Challenge of Practice:

If we use strategies for sustained shared thinking and pedagogical documentation as a process of learning design, assessment and reflective practice, with children, then we will see more children co-researching and partnering educators in learning.

Success Criteria (what children know, do, and understand):

In analysis of our pedagogical documentation, we will see and hear:

- Children collaborating in small teacher facilitated groups.
- Children collaborating in self-directed groups.
- Children collaborating to solve problems within their play.
- Children using the language of inquiry and formulating and refining questions.



STEP 3 Plan actions for improvement

Actions	NQS Links	Timeline	Roles & Responsibilities	Resources
Build educators repertoire of practice in relation to sustained shared thinking and inquiry learning	1.3.1, 1.3.2, 4.2.2	10/03/2023	Rita to work collaboratively with the team to use STEWW to inquire into current teaching practices and inform the design of appropriate professional learning. Rita and nominated teacher to lead professional learning in relation to sustained shared thinking. Teachers and educators' trial new strategies for sustained shared thinking. Use STEWW again to check-in on practice by week 5 of term 2 (2nd June). Analyse with team and determine where to from here?	EYLF, Department for Education Preschool Curriculum Resources STEWW scale. Coaching conversations with educational consultant: Anthony Semman twice per term.

			<p>All educators to build on and extend on children’s inquiries. All educators to document children’s inquiry learning/research in journals. All educators to set up learning environment to support co-research with children.</p>	<p>Kathy Murdoch, “The Power of Inquiry” Adelaide Miethke Preschool Director Partnership network and ECL SST Plink course from 2021 DfE Literacy Summit</p>
<p>Continue to build / embed Pedagogical Documentation as a way of working.</p>		<p>17/3 3/4 webinar 16/6 3/8 webinar 12/9 webinar 1/12 Dates for coaching conversations not determined yet</p>	<p>Rita to facilitate for all staff, to participate in Inner West Partnership Professional Learning Program 2023.</p> <p>Educators to ensure a considerable part of the weekly team meeting is set aside for the sharing and analysing of pedagogical documentation.</p> <p>All educators to use professional learning to continue to revisit inquiry learning with children and use pedagogical documentation to make children’s learning and the planning cycle visible.</p>	<p>ECL and Inner West Partnership.</p> <p>Coaching conversations with educational consultant: Anthony Semman twice per term.</p> <p>EYLF planning cycle ACECQA planning cycle</p>
<p>Effectively involve families in learning design and pedagogical documentation.</p>	6.1.1	<p>Term 1 weeks 0-6</p> <p>Term 1 Information evening</p> <p>Begin as relationships are being developed with families and continue</p> <p>Term 2</p>	<p>Staff to invite parents to join the preschool parent committee. Use this group as a forum for supporting learning design and promoting this with other parents. Rita to connect with families early in the year to determine the best way to involve them in designing the learning and contributing to pedagogical documentation. Educators actively seek collaboration with families to support children’s inquiries and ongoing pedagogical documentation. To be done through Seesaw, face to face conversations, via Newsletters and other modes of two-way communication. Check in with families during parent/teacher conversations in term 2 to support families to contribute to the learning design.</p>	<p>EYLF DfE Intranet: Family engagement Approved learning framework (edi.sa.edu.au) EYLP: Postcards</p>

National Quality Standard priorities

Priority	NQS links	Key steps	Timeline	Resources	Roles & Responsibilities
Develop genuine partnership with families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support family/child well being • Support children's access and inclusion in the program • Promote understanding of the teaching and learning program 	6.1.3, 6.2.3 1.3.1	Invite parents into the centre Relocate planning wall to the entrance of the centre and invite parents to contribute to the leaning program	14/04/2023	Parenting SA CAFHS CAMHS Child Development Unit Women's and Children's Health Network	Acting Deputy Principal (ADP) to refer where necessary AP to promote the teaching and learning program through newsletters Teachers to promote the educational program through Seesaw and face to face discussions
Design strategies for engagement and sharing information with families	6.2.3	Consult with families to determine the best way to support their engagement in the preschool	31/05/2023	EYLF EYLF, Educators Guide, chapter 5, Partnerships: working with families and community	ADP to consult with the preschool parent committee to determine the best way to do this
Implement co-designed strategies to engage families	6.2.3	Staff to implement strategies designed in Term 1	15/12/2023		ADP to implement and evaluate impact of strategies
Support parents to complete parent survey	6.1.3	Display a link to survey Email a live link of Seesaw. Make hard copies available and interpret survey if necessary	24/07/2023	DfE parent survey	ADP to provide link to survey and promote this through newsletters and the Parent committee

Endorsements

Endorsed by deputy principal

Name

Rita Romano, Deputy Principal: Educational Leader

Date

Monday, 23 January 2023

Signature: *Rita Romano*

Endorsed by school principal

Name

Vicky Bitzios Nominated Supervisor

Date

Monday, 23 January 2023

Signature: *Vicky Bitzios*

Endorsed by education director

Name

Click or tap here to enter text.

Paul Newman Education Director

Date

Monday 23rd January 2023

Signature: *Paul Newman*

