ANNUAL REPORT VERIFICATION

This annual report provides the community and the Chief Executive, Department of Education and Children’s Services with important information on aspects of the operation of our preschool.

The report contains detail on aspects of the preschool’s core business and describes progress towards the achievement of priorities.

Copies of the report will be made available to:
The Chief Executive
The preschool community
All members of the Governing Council
The District Director

The annual report is one significant way in which our preschool meets accountability requirements.

This report is signed below by the Director and the Chairperson of the Governing Council to signify that it represents an accurate account of the operations of the preschool and that it complies with the requirements for the preparation of annual reports.

**Director**

Margaret Scown........................................................................................................

**Chairperson, Governing Council**

Lesley Dean..................................................................................................................
APPENDICES:

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GOLDEN GROVE KINDERGARTEN
ANNUAL REPORT 2010

OUR CORE VALUES ARE
RESPECT; CARING, SELF-WORTH; CELEBRATING EFFORT; QUALITY AND DIVERSITY.

2010 - A YEAR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR STAFF AND CHILDREN AT GOLDEN GROVE KINDERGARTEN.

CONTEXT.
During 2010 the families of the kindergarten community have continued to provide us with positive and encouraging feedback, which has shown us that our work with their children has been valued and has achieved good outcomes. All feedback has been appreciated and considered, and we have reviewed and evaluated our processes and practices accordingly. The staff would like to sincerely thank all families for their support, and especially the parents on the Governing Council during 2010, who have worked extremely well together during the year, achieving great results. We encourage other parents to think about joining the Governing Council in 2011 – it is a great way to help your child’s kindergarten whilst forming new friendships.

Our GOVERNING COUNCIL has met 10 times during 2010 and we have averaged 9-10 members. Attendance at meetings has been high. Our meetings are held on Friday mornings and the members’ children mix in with the Pre-entry children and are cared for by staff. A major fundraiser this year, a LADIES NIGHT, was held during Term 3, which raised over $900 for the kindergarten. This has been used to purchase several resources for the children’s learning. Members organised and participated in the kindergarten’s FAMILY NIGHT in Term 4, and contributed to planning and decision making throughout the year. In 2010 Governing Council members also participated in the kindergarten’s DECS SITE REVIEW process with the Assistant Regional Director, and the Early Childhood Educator attached to our site. There is more about the Site Review process mentioned later in this report.

Golden Grove Kindergarten is a stand-alone kindergarten adjacent to Golden Grove Primary School, in Bicentennial Drive, Golden Grove. We enjoy a good working relationship with the school, especially the early years’ staff, and work together for best outcomes for the children in our care. As in previous years, our staff team has provided a quality program of early childhood education and care during 2010, and have supported this with a safe, happy, active learning environment, an open door policy, a strong emphasis on communication and feedback, while reporting to our families on a regular basis. Feedback from families has been reflected upon, and acted upon where appropriate. We have had some variations in staff this year, with our 2nd E.C.W. not being a stable position, which has meant several changes in staff during the year. However, with rising enrolments, and an increase in attendances during 2010, we have now regained the 1.0 position of an Early Childhood Worker, (giving us 1 director, 1 teacher and 2 E.C.W.’s). Attendance data collected in the first 2 weeks of Term 4, 2010, shows that we are now eligible for an extra .5 teacher, and although the funding will not be provided until later in the term, the Governing Council approved our request that the kindergarten should pay for that .5 position during the term, as our high numbers mean that we need the extra person. We have 101 children enrolled in Term 4, 2010, and a number of children with challenging behaviours, and so having an extra teacher at appropriate times, means a better quality program for everyone, and enables us to more effectively focus on our…………

….CORE BUSINESS.

Our Core Business and the embedded culture of our kindergarten is to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for all children, through a relentless focus on teaching and learning and on the wellbeing of all children. We have a strong emphasis on encouraging and developing the children’s involvement and engagement in deep learning, their love of learning and their motivation to learn. We build on children’s prior knowledge and learn from their interests and the information that they, and their families, share with us. We believe in the importance of initiating and exploring quality relationships with children.

We have established 5 Principles of Learning at Golden Grove Kindergarten - RELATIONSHIPS, CHILDREN’S VOICE, CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT, ENABLING LEARNING DISPOSITIONS. We share these Principles with families on enrolment, and with relief staff and other visitors to our kindergarten. (Refer to App. 1 for more details)

Golden Grove Kindergarten has been one of several focus sites for ‘COMPREHENSION’ in the Northern Adelaide Region in 2010, and will continue to be in 2011.

During 2010, our Site Improvement Plan (See App. 2), focussed on improving the comprehension skills of all our children by 5%, (based on results in our Summative
Reports for the last 3 years). These results related to the skills of ‘gathering information, asking questions, seeking clarification and considering possibilities’. Looking at our data from our Summative Reports for 2007 - 2009, we saw that the results for ‘distance travelled’ by children in these areas, showed that 47% of our children had scored a ‘Consistent’ score, and these results had not altered significantly over the last 3 years. We therefore wished to design a tool that would allow us to measure improvement during 2010 – and during that year our curriculum planning would focus on children asking questions, solving problems and gaining a deep understanding (comprehension) of a topic/interest or area. The data collection tool, ‘Educator Rating of children’s Active Involvement using the processes of questioning, problem solving, exploration, experimentation and demonstration.’ (See App. 3), was designed to cover all areas of our focus, using some Key Areas of Outcomes 4 and 5 from the ‘Early Years Learning Framework’ curriculum document. It is designed to be evidence based, i.e. staff collected data over time, (4 terms), through observations in authentic contexts and in a range of situations. This also gave us the opportunity to become more familiar with the ‘Early Years Learning Framework’, our new curriculum document. (The information that we obtained this year could not have been obtained through a checklist.) Strategies that were employed over the year included:

- Staff attended many Comprehension professional development opportunities.
- Staff were encouraged to reflect on their own theories and practices, and to read supporting publications. (Our focus was a lot about changing, and reflecting on theory, practice and documentation techniques.)
- Staff discussions (i.e. brainstorming of teaching strategies.)
- Different curriculum and teaching approaches were trialled to cover a topic in depth – e.g. project approach, encouraging children to ask questions and lead/extend their own learning.
- Investigation into how books can extend children’s understanding and vocabulary development. (See notes App. 4)
- Use of I.C.T. to support language and literacy learning.

Some of the challenges we have faced during 2010 include having new staff members with several changes in the number of staff and part time staff, which affects our ability to learn together, and to focus on new directions, and also means that there is not always a common understanding and philosophy amongst all staff. COMPREHENSION is a large area of teaching and learning, and more time is needed for all staff to continue to develop a good understanding, and to practice the skills to implement and document learning in a new or different way.

The results of the data we collected during 2010, are as follows. We collected data on 29 children, beginning in their first term, Term 1. In Term 4, the last term of kindergarten for those children, 24 were in the ‘Consistent’ range, and 5 were in the ‘Expanding’ range. This showed an increase in the Consistent range, of 36% on the previous year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of the 5 children who were not in the Consistent range, 4 were receiving Preschool Support for Speech and/or Language difficulties, and 1 was receiving Early Intervention time for language difficulties.

What are the implications of this data?

As well as affirming our work and showing great literacy learning outcomes for our children, the data also certainly supports our belief that it is very important to provide extra support for children with speech and language difficulties. The data supports research which states that these children are at risk for future reading and literacy success. We will therefore continue to provide not only preschool support and early intervention for children with identified additional needs in literacy areas who quality for this support, but continue to work with these and other children in small groups and ability groups during session times.

Other implications of the data we have collected, and of our journey this year, will be mentioned at the end of this report in ‘Future Planning’.

A culture of inquiry is embedded at Golden Grove Kindergarten, and we will continue our journey of learning and discovery during 2011.

**OUR ENROLMENTS AND ATTENDANCES.**

Our average attendances, (see data below) have been higher than the State and Northern Adelaide Region average for every term but one in the last 3 years, and then only very minimal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>86.8 86.3 84.9 86.5</td>
<td>85.6 86 83.9 84.8</td>
<td>87.8 91.9 86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECS</td>
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<td>87.2 87.8 86.1 86.8</td>
<td>88.8 90.3 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>93.3 87.4 93.1 88.9</td>
<td>88 92 90.9 89.3</td>
<td>88.8 92.4 90.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have continued to encourage parents to assist their child/children to attend kindergarten on a regular basis, and regular attendance is a reflection of confidence in our kindergarten and its program. As predicted in our projected numbers for 2010, enrolments have increased dramatically this year, with over 85 children all year, culminating with 101 in Term 4. As I write, our projected enrolments for Term 1, 2011, are 97, and we expect more children to seek enrolment between now and then. We have again accepted several children this year from both interstate and overseas. The biggest impact that higher enrolments have on our kindergarten, besides the number of staff we need, is the higher number of requests for full day care. In 2010 we have struggled to give everyone the sessions they want, and as a result, the numbers of children in our ‘lunch bunch’ has increased to up to 20 children per day.
DESTINATION DATA.
We continue to emphasise the value of public education when discussing choices with parents, encouraging families to visit to their local schools so that they can make informed choices. In 2010, 77.5% of our children have moved on to attend public schools. (72.8% to Golden Grove Primary and the rest to Keithcot Farm, Surrey Downs and Greenwith Primary). Of the remainder, 10.2% have gone to Pedare Christian Junior School, which is our closest private school. The remaining 12% of children have chosen other private schools in the area.

OUR PARENT OPINION SURVEY
In Terms 3 and 4, 2010 we gave each family whose child was leaving for school, a parent opinion survey. This year we chose to use the DECS survey we used before the online one was offered. We distributed 33 surveys to families and received 20 responses, (as compared to 24 responses from 78 surveys in 2009) {On the table below, a rating of 6 (strongly agree) represents the highest scale rating available, with 1 (strongly disagree), the lowest.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT OPINION – 2010</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM</td>
<td>5.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This equates to an overall average of 5.4, as compared to an overall average of 5.2 in 2007, when we last used this same survey. Some feedback comments from parents as follows:

“I encourage the term projects. My daughter has learnt a lot about buildings, eggs and chickens, and bones this year.”

(This comment relates directly to our Site Improvement Plan goals.)

“My daughter has developed many skills with the guidance of staff.”

“Excellent quality – would be great if the kindy was granted that extra teacher.”

“My child has grown in confidence and developed many skills.”

“The African Project helps the kids and all of us to be mindful of other’s needs and cultures.”

At the end of their first term, or first 10 weeks, of kindergarten, we ask parents for written feedback in the form of our own survey about the program, the staff and the resources of our site. Three parents commented on how busy the centre has become and how it is harder to find a staff member to talk with, at the beginning of sessions especially. They suggested that as the numbers of children attending have risen, we should have been provided with more staff! We agree! However, until this term, attendances in the 2 crucial data collection weeks did not qualify us for an additional .5 teacher, and although we have employed an extra .5 teacher, we will not receive confirmation of DECS funding until the end of the term. These are a few selections of feedback comments from our own survey:

“I like the way my child is making broader choices about the things he does”

“It is a well balanced program, and we receive plenty of information about our child’s progress.”

“All the staff are friendly and approachable.”

“We love seeing the children’s work around the room.”

“The kindy has a warm, friendly, organised feel and a great range of activities both inside and out.”

“The 2 reports provided during the year are very thorough.”

“The staff are wonderful. Between the whiteboard and newsletters, we are well informed, you are meeting my child’s needs 100% - thank you so much.”

“I like that the programs are made fun and encourage the children to be confident.”

“I love Golden Grove Kindy – the grounds are beautiful, clean and safe – inside also.”

“I like that the child’s emotional and social wellbeing is thought of as a critical part of their learning journey. My child’s interest in literacy and problem solving has definitely expanded since beginning kindy.”

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM.
When children commence pre-entry, parents fill in a questionnaire that gives us some background information about their child. This data about each child’s family, introduces us to some of the children’s strengths and interests. As children begin their 4 sessions of kindergarten, they are allocated to a small group. Each educator has their own group of children for the year, which changes each term as children begin and leave. Small groups meet daily, and in this way we try to ensure that every child’s strengths and/or possible areas of concern are known. This year our teacher has also worked with a small group of children considered to be at risk, based on their literacy ability. These groups have a literacy focus – oral language, comprehension of a story, print knowledge and phonological awareness.

Parents receive a copy of our program for the term, and then our weekly learning experiences, special visitors – people and animals - or events, etc., are described in newsletters and/or on noticeboards. Parents are invited to join in sessions and to contribute in a variety of different ways. Photos of children learning and involved in special events are displayed regularly on the notice boards, and in newsletters. Newsletters are weekly and very much appreciated by families, our feedback tells us.

SPECIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM IN 2010.
**A relief teacher, who has worked as a TRT at our site for many years, has, during 4th term, taught music skills to the children.
**”Kindy in the Park” - as in other years, in October, during International Children’s Week, several kindergartens and child care centres in our district met at Civic Park for a fun day of activities, and many families joined us there.

**Animals from ‘Animal Kapers’ visited us during 3rd term – always a great learning experience for the children, and a lot of fun – for adults too!**

**Harmony Day – In March we celebrated Harmony Day, with the theme of “EVERYONE BELONGS”, with a Fun-a-thon in which all the children participated. We raised
enough money to post 3 parcels to Chifundi Primary School in Zimbabwe.

**Literacy Kits** for borrowing. We have over 90 kits and these are very popular and borrowed regularly by families, as well as being used by staff as a resource.

**In Term 4 Mike Jackson** entertained the children with a show that included lots of interactive singing and playing of musical instruments.

**In Term 3 we had ‘Living Eggs’** and we watched as 12 fluffy chickens hatched and grew daily as we kept them warm and safe. Great excitement and learning!

**In November, a representative from WheelieNet came and spoke to the children about his life in a wheelchair, and the children were able to experience using small wheelchairs.**

**In the last week of the year, we have a Celebration Day** when most of our families join us to celebrate the year’s achievements with songs, food and fun. Each year at this celebration, a ‘Volunteer Award’ is presented by Jennifer Rankine, Federal MP, to a person from our parent community, nominated by the staff.

**Visits from a Fire Appliance** in November, were great fun, and a very real life learning experience for the children.

**Family Fun Night** in November was attended by over 60 families.

Besides sharing a meal with families, we set up the kindergarten with lots of learning experiences for visitors to participate in with their children. The evening provides lots of opportunities for staff to meet and talk with other members of the children’s families.

**AND some very special learning experiences** have been made possible by our teacher, who has organised and facilitated regular visits of various types of Lizards, Hopping Mice, House Mice, Green Tree Frogs, Leaf Insects, Tadpoles, Silkworms and many other creatures, as well as skeletons, shells, etc., from the Nature Education Centre.

**As well as being fun experiences for the children, these special learning experiences are also teaching them** social skills and life skills, such as sharing, participating, responsibility, care and respect for animals/pets, empathy, patience, listening, communication, following instructions, being part of a group and broadening their world view.

As a result of special process undertaken this year, a **SITE REVIEW PROCESS** our site has been **VALIDATED.** Site Validation verifies the quality of site self review processes, the findings of site self-review and the effectiveness of the improvement actions undertaken over a three year cycle. The process was undertaken over 2 half days, and involved Northern Regional Office Line Managers, colleagues from other kindergartens, members of the Governing Council and all staff members. Our Validation Report stated that ‘The panel believes that the Director, staff and the community provide an outstanding exemplar

with respect to managing improvement in a preschool setting. The panel notes that over the 3 year focus of this validation there has been targeted improvement.’ One recommendation was made encouraging us to take more advantage of the opportunities of being co-located with Golden Grove Primary School.

We have an established **TRANSITION PROGRAM** with Golden Grove Primary School, which has been altered over the years to meet children’s and parents’ needs. Kindergarten staff join in transition visits when possible, to assist children to feel comfortable and to assist with children with additional needs. We regularly use the school ‘gym’ with our children and their large playground, both of which provide more space and a variety of learning experiences which add to and enhance those we can provide at kindergarten. During 2010 we have had regular weekly visits from children in Year 5, through the school buddy system.

**REPORTING TO PARENTS.**

Programming and assessment observations at Golden Grove Kindergarten have been based this year on the Outcome Areas of the new National Early Years’ Curriculum document, the ‘Early Years Learning Framework’, also referred to as the ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming’ document. In 2010, we have programmed using the Outcome Areas in this document, and in 2011 we will change the way we report to fit in with the EYLF document outcome areas also.

Staff members observe children while they are involved in active learning, which is ‘learning through play’, and those observations are recorded. Together with other information about individual children, these observations are used as a basis for programming for both individuals and the group as a whole. We endeavour to build upon the children’s interests and abilities, with the aim of improving outcomes for everyone.

Close to the end of a child’s first 10 weeks of kindergarten, we complete a report from information gathered on individual children through observations, work samples, photos and anecdotes. Information is recorded under outcome areas and Learning Goals are set for each individual child for the next term. Parents receive this report soon after their first 10 weeks, and then a Summative Report, reporting under the same indicators, when their children leave kindergarten, normally at the end of their 4th term. (I have not included proformas as an appendix this year, as they will be changing in 2011) A copy of this report is given to the school the child is to attend, one is kept at our site, and a copy is placed in the child’s profile folder, which the family keeps.

**CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS.**

During 2010, we have again been fortunate to retain our excellent Support ECW, who works with children who receive support funded by DECS, and also those who are targeted for site funded Early Intervention by staff. This year, we have again needed to employ a 2nd support ECW during Terms 3 and 4, because of the large number of children requiring support.

During 2010 we have supported around 30 children with a wide range of ability and severity, through DECS Support Services or site funded Early Intervention. Another 4 children have been provided with Bilingual Support. Other programs offered to support children’s learning and development this year, have included
regular small groups targeting specific speech sounds and other phonological awareness and oral language skills, for children who, because of our high numbers of children with additional needs, were unable to be provided with funded Early Intervention time.

**Early Intervention and Support programs** have, as always, contributed to significant improvement outcomes in 2010. Children who have begun school after receiving support at kindergarten have transitioned to school with more chance of success. Negotiated Education Plans, plus planned discussions between our staff and teachers at the schools, enable us to exchange all relevant information, and with the support of our DECS Disabilities Co-ordinator and Speech Therapist, we have been able to contribute to a smoother transition to school for these children, and influence the support that they will receive as they begin school.

Embedded in our program at Golden Grove Kindergarten is our “**AFRICAN PROJECT**”, through which we support the learning of the children of Chifundi Primary school in rural Zimbabwe. The learning around the project extends the children’s knowledge and understanding of other cultures, and whilst this is only one way in which we do that, this project assists the children to identify with children who are in need. It teaches the children that, at 4 years old, they can make a difference in the world, as they help to raise money to post stationery items, books and toys to Zimbabwe. Children donate items, and assist to raise postage money through recycling bottles and cans and doing jobs at home for their families. Our ongoing relationship (since October 1995) with the now 800+ children at Chifundi Primary School, has assisted us to teach the values of sharing and caring whilst learning about a world very different from our own. We know that this project has broadened the world view of many children, and indeed, many families, who have attended our kindergarten over the years. This year we have posted several parcels of exercise books to Chifundi Primary School, and several parcels of stationery and toys, to support children who are orphans. As in past years, the 2010 governing council members, and the parent community, have embraced and supported this project, and are pleased with their children’s learning in this area.

**IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES AND FUTURE PLANNING. WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

In 2011 there will be many new children attending our centre, and new challenges, including changes in staff. We will continue to strive to provide an active learning environment where children can experience deep learning, so they can become successful learners and confident and creative individuals. A new challenge for us to face as staff is the introduction in S.A. of a single intake to school from the beginning of 2014. This huge change impacts on our enrolments from now on, and will require us to explain to new families the implications of this change, and how it will affect their children’s School start date, and therefore kindergarten start date. With the cut off date for children to begin school being in May, some children will not begin kindergarten until they are over 4 years of age, and this will be a big change for parents to accept. Reporting to families under the 5 outcome areas in the ‘Early Years Framework’ will be a priority in 2011.

We will continue to examine closely the data we collect and the way we collect it, and will be using ‘Smart Targets’ when we write our Site Improvement Plan for 2011.

Our data collected this year has informed us of areas of staff development that we will pursue in 2011. We will continue to develop staff skills to look in depth at one topic, which provides more opportunities for deep level learning and vocabulary development. Staff will also be supported to be fully aware of the ‘teachable moments’ when learning could be enhanced by the use of internet sites, supplying texts, etc. It will continue to be a high priority for staff to take advantage of professional development, research and learning, especially related to comprehension, during 2011.
APPENDIX 1

Information for temporary relieving Teachers and E.C.W.s

Our philosophy is influenced by contemporary theories of education and acknowledges the interrelated nature of learning and development in a social and cultural world. The following quotes have influenced our thinking.

‘Our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and other children.’ (Malaguzzi in SACSA)

The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited.’ (Pultarch)

Education must generate curiosity, creativity, competence and compassion. (Carr ?)

‘High levels of wellbeing maximise children’s learning potential and encourage the positive development of children’s innate explorative drive, a sense of agency and the desire to interact with responsive others’. (Winter 2003)

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Relationships: (Social wellbeing)
Children are active important members of a variety of communities, including family, ethnic cultures, recreational, kindergarten, childcare and friendship groups. Children develop a sense of belonging and their understanding of the world develops through these social and cultural interactions.

Children’s voice: (Spiritual wellbeing: a sense of meaning, purpose & connectedness)
The rights of the child necessitates they have a voice which is actively listened to. Children are to be respected and their individual strengths and abilities are valued. Education must support democracy and diversity.

(The values of our centre are: respect, caring, self-worth, celebrating effort, quality and diversity.)

Construction of knowledge: (Cognitive wellbeing)
People construct and co-construct meaning. Learning is built on children's prior learning experiences, their understandings and interests. Learning is life long and development involves different pathways and occurs in different ways. Language is important as it is through talking that children make sense of their experiences and incorporate new ideas and existing knowledge.

Engagement and Involvement
People learn through engagement in complex experiences in which they make relevant, purposeful connections.
Play is fundamental to children’s learning, providing opportunities for children to express their ideas and feelings and engage in exploration, imagination, experimentation and manipulation.

Enabling Learning Dispositions: (Emotional and physical wellbeing)
Children’s identity as competent and capable learners is promoted. Positive and robust dispositions such as autonomy, self responsibility, self-regulation (Executive Functions), interdependence, optimism, resilience and the enjoyment of learning are fostered.

The following are just a few of our Pedagogical Practices:

- Please look at our timetables and note the time allowed for uninterrupted Active Learning (play).

- Children's interests are acted upon. They are encouraged to choose and negotiate their own learning, meaning that they will ask for resources particularly in the outdoor learning environment.
• Open ended and collaborative experiences are provided. Adults are actively involved in children’s learning; scaffolding, using open ended questions and inquiry based learning principles.

• Stencils, worksheets, pre-cut and drawn shapes are not to be used as we have a strong focus on creativity and thinking. We encourage each child to have a go and therefore do not draw or make things for children. “Encourages children’s creative expression and multiple representations (stereotypical adult representations such as stencils are not evident)” from Active Learning Environment: Domain 1 in Reflect, Respect, Relate: Assessing for Learning and Development in the Early Years using Observation Scales. (DECS 2008)

We welcome offers of documentation of children’s involvement in their learning experiences. We focus on observing children’s learning dispositions, higher order competencies and processes and the integrated skills and understandings used to support these in authentic contexts (as mentioned in the Curriculum Accountability Framework for Preschools 2008).

*We acknowledge that some of our beliefs and practices may differ to your own, and appreciate your support in following our philosophy. If you have any questions regarding the above please talk to a staff member.*

We hope you enjoy your time at our centre!
## APPENDIX 2

### GOLDEN GROVE KINDERGARTEN’S SITE IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR RESULTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Smart Target is:</strong>&lt;br&gt;By the end of Term 4, 2010 there will be a 5% improvement in the number of children achieving a consistent score in the Learning Outcomes indicator ‘gathers information, asks questions, seeks clarification, considers possibilities’.&lt;br&gt;Our 2009 data showed that 47% of children achieved a ‘consistent’ score in our Summative Reports.</td>
<td>We have had inquiry questions over the last 2 years into children’s thinking skills and involvement in learning. This year our focus will centre around children asking questions, solving problems and gaining a deep understanding (comprehension) of a topic/interest or area.&lt;br&gt;&quot;By encouraging children to ask questions, educators can make curriculum content more relevant and authentic. It means that children are engaged in learning that is personalised, and focussed on their understanding of the world.”&lt;br&gt;“Limited experiences in the early years, especially early language and problem solving experiences, mean less permanent connections in the brain.”&lt;br&gt;Our target will also form part of our overall Emergent Literacy program, as these skills and understandings are essential to support deep level thinking and comprehension.&lt;br&gt;“Intensive, integrated language vocabulary and literacy experiences – talking, questioning, responding, reading and telling stories – should form the core of early learning programs that aim to boost thinking.”&lt;br&gt;<strong>Quote References:</strong> Morgan J. “Philosophical Inquiry in Early Childhood.” EveryChild Vol. 13, No. 3 2007.&lt;br&gt;Elliot A. (editor) “Building thinking and problem solving skills in Early Childhood.” EveryChild Vol. 13, No. 3, 2007. Early Childhood Aust. Inc.</td>
<td>*Develop understandings and expectations of the target and rational as a staff team.&lt;br&gt;*Design evidence based data collection tools.&lt;br&gt;*Pedagogy – staff learning, sharing, professional development. Use of EYLF document to support learning.&lt;br&gt;*engage in research around curriculum knowledge and practices that will enhance deep level learning.&lt;br&gt;*Participate in Regional Professional learning and joint site learning activities.&lt;br&gt;*Allocate funding to support learning initiatives.&lt;br&gt;*Provide support for learners with additional needs, through site funded Early Intervention, and DECS funded Support Services.</td>
<td>When we write our Summative Reports, our data collection tool will support and validate the information. We will be able to collate this information from the documents and calculate the percentage improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3

Educator rating of children’s Active Involvement using the processes of questioning, problem solving, exploration, experimentation and demonstration.

Assign the score that best describes the child’s approach to the following based on observations of the child in a range of situations and contexts over time. (authentic assessment) (There should be documented evidence to support the scores assigned). Adapted from the EYLF, Troll and RRR documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name___________________</th>
<th>1ST Term score____________</th>
<th>4TH Term Score__________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Interpretation Guide: 0-5 = Developing
6-9 = Expanding
10-12 = Consistent/well developed

How would you describe the child’s pattern of **asking questions** about topics that interest him or her? The child:

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On a few occasions will ask some questions reflecting curiosity about why things happen or why people do things. e.g. ‘What is it?’ ‘What are we going to do’?</td>
<td>On several occasions will ask interesting questions to gain more information about a topic of interest.</td>
<td>Will often ask questions reflecting curiosity. Confidently asks a range of questions to extend conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The discussions resulting are brief and limited. May ask ‘why’ questions without necessarily expecting or waiting for an actual response.</td>
<td>On occasions these have led to an interesting conversation.</td>
<td>Will ask for clarification if they don’t understand.</td>
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How would you describe the child’s pattern of engaging in **problem solving** experiences and situations? The child:

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<tr>
<td>Gives up easily On most occasions doesn’t attempt a different method/strategy requires adult help on most occasions May show frustration i.e. cries Displays lack of confidence i.e. ‘I can’t do this’ or ‘I don’t know’ Is beginning to contribute to group problem solving experiences or has a passive role</td>
<td>Will at times persist, trial different methods/strategies before seeking help in familiar situations e.g. cause and effect, trial and error May lack confidence when confronted with new experiences/problems Often requires adult support to help achieve a resolution or outcome Participates in some group problem solving experiences i.e. contributes some ideas</td>
<td>Persists even though difficult Is confident to trial different methods/strategies in a range of situations Uses complex methods and different thinking strategies Tries out strategies that were effective to solve problems in on situation to a new context Collaborates with adults and/or peers to seek solutions</td>
</tr>
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</table>
How does the child **explore ideas and theories** using the processes of experimentation, investigation, hypothesising and inquiry? When engaged in learning experiences the child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Displays frequently interrupted activity levels (levels of involvement)</th>
<th>Displays more or less maintained activity levels. Shows curiosity and a degree of purposefulness</th>
<th>Displays activity with intense moments (may explore an idea over several days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shows some evidence of exploration and experimentation in play</td>
<td>Shows some safe risk taking, trialling of new ideas</td>
<td>Shows creativity and complexity and uses a range of skills and processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t usually undertake risks or challenges</td>
<td>Will follow their own interests and may ask for resources</td>
<td>Applies and uses mathematical and scientific concepts and understandings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathers information about the environment using senses</td>
<td>Does experiment and investigate but needs support to follow through ideas to a deep level</td>
<td>Consults texts* to seek further information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigates everyday objects, materials and equipment</td>
<td>Shows and ability to interact with others to explore ideas Will listen to and incorporate others ideas on occasions</td>
<td>Initiates learning and follows through. Is able to take responsibility for their own learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May use self talk</td>
<td>May show signs of applying their learning in new way</td>
<td>Uses feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(*Texts: things that we read, view, listen to & that we create in order to share meaning i.e. books, magazines, posters, screen based.)

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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displays more or less maintained activity levels. Shows curiosity and a degree of purposefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows some evidence of exploration and experimentation in play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t usually undertake risks or challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathers information about the environment using senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigates everyday objects, materials and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May use self talk</td>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displays activity with intense moments (may explore an idea over several days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows creativity and complexity and uses a range of skills and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows creativity and complexity and uses a range of skills and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays activity with intense moments (may explore an idea over several days)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you describe the child’s pattern of **demonstrating** and **representing** their discoveries, ideas, theories, thinking and understandings? (Literacy: includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama as well as talking, reading and writing). The child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Needs encouragement and support to describe and explain their ideas</th>
<th>Simply describes what they are doing, seeing, why things are happening</th>
<th>Is able to articulate in detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When using media e.g. clay, paint is at the experimental stage rather than representational</td>
<td>Benefits from adult to scaffold and clarify attempts</td>
<td>Shows pride and confidently shares learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in adult directed drawing experiences i.e. about a story or discussion topic</td>
<td>Drawings, creations show some degree of knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>Able to represent ideas in a variety of ways e.g. through play, visual arts, construction (literacy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows some evidence of their thinking and understandings in their play (can be easily missed)</td>
<td>At times wants to share their discoveries with others</td>
<td>Uses symbols in play to represent and make meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests adult to scribe</td>
<td>Requests adult to scribe</td>
<td>Uses information and communication technologies for applying creative processes &amp; to represent their thinking</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Comprehension and Communication

Part of our investigation into chicks involved a small project exploring how children’s books extend young children’s meaning making and vocabulary development. The project involved a group of children and a series of experiences relating to the books ‘Dora’s Chicks’ and ‘The Chicken and Egg’.

The following strategies were used:

- Repeated readings of the books
- Children retelling the story through language and drawing
- Acting out the story using props
- Giving definitions to some words while reading aloud and encouraging children to use the same words when they answer questions and retell the story
- Adult modelling the asking of questions i.e. I wonder why...?, and encouraging children to ask questions and make predictions
- Children answering a range of question types particularly open-ended ones that go ‘beyond the right answer’ and the literal meaning of the text (inference)
- Reading other books related to the topic
- Book related play such as the story book table and pretend play with objects related to the concepts or characters introduced.

*At the end of the project the children in the group demonstrated an increased understanding of the books and also had increased their vocabularies in relation to this topic.

**Providing the first hand experience of watching chickens hatch and grow played a vitally important part in increasing all children’s language development.

Reference