

# Pre school Annual Report 2010

Pre school Name: FRIEDA CORPE KINDERGARTEN  
Location Number: 3632

The core business of Frieda Corpe Kindergarten:  
" To provide a challenging and enriching environment that engages all children as powerful learners."

**Highlights CHILD INITIATED LEARNING, REGGIO EMILIA INFLUENCES, INCREASED CHILDRENS INVOLMENT, LEARNING AND WELLBEING, KIDS MATTER PROJECT.**

Using natural resources.  
Reggio Emilia influences.



Our kindly community.



Displaying children's learning.

Art studio.

Using recyclable materials.



Child Initiated learning.



Excursion to patch theatre.



Sue Harris puppet incursion.  
Protective behaviours program



Discovering what is in our local community. Keeping fit and active.



Family function- Children's disco



Children's elaborate creativity skills within a C.I.C



Shadow puppets



Finding the turnips.



Produce from the vegetable garden.



'Let's make something yummy with the vegies from our garden.'



Frieda Corpe weather station.

Healthy Eating



Learning through technology using digital cameras and microscope.

Lifecycles



Ruth Tuck art experience.

The children's art show opening night at the Onkaparinga Arts Gallery.

Nurturing and caring for others.



Relevant and meaningful learning: What would you like to learn more about? "Can we grow sunflowers in our garden?" We all learn in different ways and within a C.I.C children explore many different ways of expressing themselves and testing their ideas.



You can do it program. Gabby Get-Along.

### CONTEXT STATEMENT

Frieda Corpe Kindergarten is situated in Port Noarlunga. It is a stand-alone centre to which children then attend Port Noarlunga P.S., Christies Beach P.S. & a wide variety of private schools in the southern area. Parents are strongly involved throughout their children's learning at kindy by sharing about their child's experiences, which staff members incorporate into the well-known child-initiated curriculum learning program. Families from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and various family compositions attend the centre and we have a slow increasing number of families from various cultural backgrounds. We have second and now third generations of families coming back through the centre. Through our dedication to provide the best possible education and care through current innovative practices families have sourced our kindy from as far as Willunga, Mt Compass, Moana and Hackham. Through committed marketing of our centre and positive word of mouth in the community we continue to remain at capacity with enrolments. We have an extremely dedicated staff team which hopes to remain stable for years to come.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND TARGETS

### Strategic Direction 1: Children are confident and involved learners.

Targets: That all children will confidently and successfully engage in learning through play, within a Child Initiated Curriculum.

: That all children develop skills to self regulate their emotions to increase their self-confidence, sense of self and wellbeing.

*This year has been a challenging and exciting journey delving deeper into how we as educators can best support children so they develop a deep emotional attachment to learning.*

*We strive to make the difference at Frieda Corpe Kindergarten to enable all of our young children to become: Successful Learners, who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve, Confident Learners who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives and Responsible Citizens who make a positive contribution to society.*

*In reference to this, with a whole kindy approach, The Parent Voice, kindy staff and families collaboratively developed the heart and core values of the community and ethos for our centre: **Respect, Individuality, Creativity and Harmony**. These values were embedded throughout the curriculum and children's learning and will be celebrated on a new kindy sign depicting our community of lifelong learners.*

Current research shows that WELLBEING IS CENTRAL TO LEARNING AND LEARNING IS CENTRAL TO WELLBEING. Our priority this year was to explore the best ways of achieving this.

- 1. We targeted ourselves as educators and through our self review we critically reflected on current teaching practices. – individual teaching styles, how we develop positive relationships with children, parents, within our staff team and the wider community. We also reviewed the curriculum offered and the quality of the learning environment that we provide.**
- 2. We observed the children in regards to how they developed positive relationships and the effect this had on their learning.**
- 3. We then looked at how we could best support parents in ways of supporting their children at home in regards to their wellbeing.**

#### Professional Learning

- At the beginning of the year the staff team attended a 1-day wellbeing conference to all bond and begin 2010 with a healthy mindset. Staff put strategies in place to make sure they were looking after their own wellbeing so that they were able to fully give of themselves to develop and maintain positive relationships with the children.
- Last year we put in an application to be part of the Kids Matter Early Childhood Pilot Project for 2010 & 2011 that focuses on children's mental health and wellbeing (Kids Matter is a key initiative of the Rudd Government's approach to the promotion of good mental health, the prevention of mental illness and early intervention where problems arise) and were very fortunate to win a position amongst hundreds of other kindergartens. This year we focussed on two of the four components- "Creating a sense of community" and "Developing children's social and emotional skills" and attended professional learning with our facilitator Donna Broadhurst.
- All staff engaged in peer assessment, reflection and mentoring with Donna Broadhurst on our teaching styles and how we as educators develop relationships with children.
- Annette and Kerry attended a one-day training on how to implement the "You can do it" program, which supports children's social and emotional development.
- Kerry attended a full day seminar with Dr Dan Siegel "Beyond Survival". He shared recent developments in the practices of interpersonal neurobiology to promote enduring recovery from violence related trauma
- Annette and Kerry attended a forum "International Early Years Experts-A critical & Creative Analysis of Education."
- Annette attended a workshop on Linking The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia to Reggio Emilia practices.
- Kerry and Annette attended Early Childhood Forums on "Emotional Intelligence" with Wilson McCaskill and "Neurobiology in Early Childhood" with Dr Margaret Simms.
- Annette and Pam attended training and development "Join the dots" which involved how to best support children with special needs.
- All staff attended training on implementing the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia- Belonging, Being & Becoming.
- Kerry is a member of the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange-research for a new culture of childhood and shares innovative practices between other educators.
- During 2010 we utilized both the centres closure days for the staff team to attend Professional Learning at a 3 day conference in Sydney: Exploring the Reggio Emilia Approach with Dr Nkechye Ezeh
- As part of our Site's Improvement Plan the Frieda Corpe Team visited other exceptional sites such as Saint Andrews and The Galilee Catholic School to observe and learn about other teaching strategies in the areas of Reggio Emilia influences, literacy and inquiry based practices.

## **Outcomes:**

- Attending professional learning on Reggio Emilia practices together proved invaluable for the staff team to be able to observe and learn practices together and then use this to further our own reflection and to continue to make positive changes and improved practices at Frieda Corpe Kindergarten.
- -Changes included the set up of the environment, the placement of furniture to maximize the feeling of openness, de-cluttering the doorway to allow both doors to remain open and welcoming, positioning of learning experiences on tables, carpet and cushions that encouraged smaller group participation, a painting studio that encouraged children to explore a range of media, limiting the amount of distracting colourful displays, posters, art work hanging around the centre and keeping it to pin up boards and off of windows to allow the most natural light in possible, displaying children's learning on story boards with photos, black background so that the pictures were the focal point and most importantly capturing the children's voices in typed text. Resources were also gradually changed to utilizing natural materials from the environment. Provocations were included in the curriculum to extend children's sense of wonderment and curiosity, which also involved skills of problem solving, literacy and numeracy.
- Staff observed individual children's behaviour and their levels of involvement in play based activities and then again after changes were made to the environment.
- The data showed that with the changes to the environment the children that were engaged in their learning previously continued to do so and with the 10% who were less engaged 9% were observed to be more engaged.
- Parents gave a lot of positive feedback to the changes and had noticed the difference in the overall feel of calmness in the centre and the children's engagement.
- With open-ended natural resources the children engaged in more creative thought and problem solving. They interacted more calmly with the resources and of the 50% of children that explored the resources 48% independently came back to play with it several times through the week to explore further and extend their skills.
- The famous poem by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood learning "The Hundred Languages of Children" became more prominent in parents newsletters and the kindy environment to continually positively challenge people's perceptions and understanding about the power of children's learning through play.
- All staff have a shared and united approach to providing the best possible teaching practices to support children's wellbeing and learning. With this, a whole site agreement was developed to support children's successful learning by providing a curriculum that utilizes the Being, Belonging, Becoming document with programming, resources and documentation based on Reggio Emilia influences to continue to strengthen and support our Child Initiated Learning.
- Kerry shared the latest brain research from Dr Dan Siegel, which enhanced teacher's knowledge and understanding of how trauma related issue effects children's learning and how we can best support these children for success with their learning.
- Reggio Emilia information resources were purchased to share with families.
- The centre purchased Wilson McCaskill's book "Children aren't made of china" for staff and parents to borrow and excerpts were added to the newsletter to help bring parents and teachers together in the pursuit of emotional intelligence, considerate behaviour and a lasting sense of wellbeing for children.
- Staff helped children learn soothing self talk through relaxation techniques during group time which assisted them to reflect, become self aware and soothe themselves which is an important skill in wellbeing.

## **Future plans:**

- Observe how many children are not engaging with open-ended natural resources and why?
- Possible Action Research question: Are our children able to use their imaginations and be creative or are our modern day conveniences and technology setting children up with an expectation of continually being entertained by external influences? Do they have the skill base to be able to interact with natural materials in an open ended activity creatively and use their imagination or do they seek specific toys that have a more set and limited function?
- Fund raising to enable the centre to purchase suitable resources for the children.
- Community involvement in helping to gather/source natural materials for the kindy.
- Staff training in advanced Reggio Emilia practices.
- Kerry to develop a resource information pack for new families that explains our philosophies, values, Reggio influences and programming and share this with parents during a parent information session.
- Termly celebration open nights for families to come into the centre and experience learning through play session with their child and for children to share their learning with their family.
- Staff to display the centres values with photographs around the centre adding to the professional outlook of the centre.
- Changing the display of the program into eye catching black art folders with the children's photos featuring their voices about their learning and text referencing the learning to the EYLF. This will be displayed by the entrance to encourage families to have a look to see the children's learning journey and encourage their ideas and feedback.
- Changes to the group time structure and groups of children to enable teaching staff to introduce provocations and record children's ideas, thoughts, questions and learning. (capturing children's voice)

## Kids Matter Project

2 & 3/ Along with our Reggio Emilia influences and changes staff delved deeply into the Kids Matter Project. Professional learning initially began in late 2009 so that staff had an understanding of the project and what was involved. It was crucial that the whole staff team be involved in this process so we all went to Melbourne for the initial training and then shared this with our Parent Voice and interested parents, making up a project team. This team consisted of Kerry, Annette, Tonia and Pam. There are 4 components that the project team focuses on over 2 years. This year we focussed on 'Creating a sense of community' and 'Developing children's social and emotional skills' which also fit in with our sites self review and improvement planning. Information was sent home to families in newsletters about each component and what was happening at kindy in conjunction with this to keep parents informed and share current practices. Colourful information sharing sheets were also given to parents about child development, community organisations and resources, interesting website addresses on child development and handy parenting tips. Parents also received questionnaires as part of the Flinders University's involvement in Kids Matter to collect data about children's mental health and wellbeing. (This will be collated at the end of the project to support the importance of recognising, supporting and assisting children with mental health issues in early childhood and hopefully attract more funding for resources and services for families.) Other questionnaires i.e. our Parent Opinion survey inquired into parent's thoughts about the kindy, teaching practices, parent involvement and level of leadership which staff used to make changes in how they developed relationships with parent's i.e. personal conversations with parents about children's development. Staff put strategies in place so that every parent over a particular time period had a one to one conversation with a staff member about their child's development. This continued over the rest of the year so that parents had numerous conversations with staff about their child's development and learning journey. With parents that we didn't often see phone calls were shared.

Staff observed and collected data on children's wellbeing upon entering kindy and throughout the day, their ability to self regulate their emotions and their interactions with other peers and teachers throughout the session. Staff noticed the overwhelming number of children that showed evidence of not having a positive sense of wellbeing. Over the first half of the year there was an increasing number of children that came into kindy stressed and hyperactive and requiring support in separating confidently from their caregiver. In anyone week during this time over 60% of our children were experiencing a low sense of wellbeing. More and more children were noted of requiring adult intervention to assist them with self-regulating their emotions. From continual observations of the children's wellbeing, social interactions and learning, staff discovered that the flexibility in session times for families/parents was not actually conducive to the children's wellbeing. It helped parents in their busy lives but it was not assisting the children develop positive states of wellbeing, confidence or relationships which was effecting the children's learning. It must be noted that this affected not all children but an alarming 3/4 of children were.

Once a term throughout the year staff engaged in further training and development with Donna Broadhurst our Kids Matter facilitator and shared learning and teaching practices. All staff engaged in peer evaluation with Donna who came into the centre and observed teaching practices and modelled strategies to assist with how to best support children with self-regulating their emotions. It was very powerful learning for all staff who then changed the ways in which they engaged with children. All staff practiced using Donnas' A.C.T methods (**A**cknowledge the feeling, **C**ommunicate the limit, **T**arget alternatives.) in communicating with children to assist and empower children with self-regulating their emotions. It was observed that by using this method consistently that it made a significant positive change in children's behaviour, their ability to self regulate their emotions and their ability to learn.

In following up from the suggestions and responses from the parent's questionnaires I organised two workshops for families at the kindy after hours with Donna Broadhurst. "Setting Limits on Children's behaviours" and "Are your buttons being pushed?" This was well attended with parents feeling comfortable to share concerns, ideas and ask questions. A follow up session was organised so that parents could share how their new practices were going and to learn more strategies. An informative hand out was developed for families who were unable to attend the workshops.

Each new component of Kids Matter involved the project team working closely together and facilitated ongoing self-reflection and goal setting which was invaluable in making the change to current practices. The team always strives for the best possible learning outcomes for children so this became an exciting journey of self-review and learning new approaches and teaching methodologies. Kerry and Annette attended professional development on the "You can do it! Education Early Childhood Program (A social-emotional learning curriculum) and incorporated it into the daily program.

Money raised from the Art Show was used to purchase the "You can do it!" resources and puppets to implement the program fully. Kerry developed monthly handouts for families about the program explaining the benefits, the purpose of the puppet characters and the skills that they helped children develop and supportive language to use at home. This was very well received by families who gave staff weekly updates about what they were noticing about their children's behaviours and positive self talk at home. Staff also observed the children's positive response to the puppets and the change in children's positive self-talk and behaviours.

All children made their own personal feelings book to take home which focused on recognising their emotions, what things evoke making them feel a particular way and positive ways of expressing and managing their emotions. They also contributed their ideas on a huge display board made up their individual drawings and words about what makes them feel happy. The children were very proud of their 'feel good' board and enjoyed sharing it with peers and family.

We utilized National Families Week to highlight the importance of giving every child a happy and healthy childhood. Special activities were organised with the children during the sessions promoting a positive sense of self and sharing about our families, cultures and celebrating what family means to us. Promotional material about the value of play, healthy eating and being active were shared with families. During Children's Week the children celebrated their individuality by showcasing their creative talents at the Port Noarlunga Art Gallery. The opening night was extremely well attended by family and friends and parents shared their appreciation of bringing the community together. The family social BBQ and disco also created a special sense of community with over 150 children and parents attending.

With our ongoing commitment to help educate children and families of the benefits of healthy eating practices and being active our Parent Voice developed the beginnings of a healthy eating policy, which will be continued and documented with next years Committee. In conjunction with our local nutritionists from Noarlunga Health who visit the centre quite regularly families had access to healthy eating take home packs, which promoted healthy eating practices and having fun around food.

### **Outcomes:**

- Staff changed the structure and routines of the day to assist children with their wellbeing and to help with separation anxieties, which was observed to make a positive change with the majority of children.
- All staff adopted the new methods of A.C.T teaching which made a positive impact on children's development in being able to self regulate their emotions, develop positive relationships and successfully engage in learning.
- 99% of the children showed increased skills and ability in being able to self regulate their emotions.
- 97% of the children developed and sustained positive relationships with other peers and adults.
- Children who needed extra support during the session were targeted with intervention strategies.
- Parents were given information on specialized services within their local community who could assist with children's and parents mental health concerns.
- Staff further developed knowledge on the impacts of the stress hormone cortisol and its accumulative effects on children's brain development and learning.
- Further information on how to support children's wellbeing was sent home to families via monthly newsletters, fliers, and on the web site.
- The kindy renewed its membership with Early Childhood Australia to offer resources to families and staff. The resources that were borrowed included The Research in Practice Series, Everyday Learning Series and Every Child.
- Staff and parents increased their knowledge and developed strategies and skills to assist children in self-regulating their emotions.
- Children were heard chanting the positive self-help rhymes throughout their day, which increased their pre literacy skills and wellbeing.
- Staff shared learning from professional development workshops and findings from their observations with families, which increased understandings on children's development and supported why changes were being made to services for the following year.
- From our observations and increased knowledge on children's wellbeing major changes to the children's sessions will occur as of the beginning of the year- Children will attend Kindergarten on two consecutive days Monday & Tuesday or Wednesday & Thursday to support their social, emotional and cognitive development.

### **Future plans:**

- Continue to implement the "You can do it program."
- Offer families "The Circle of Security" workshop with Donna Broadhurst
- Staff reflected that over the years more and more children were coming into kindy with huge amounts of stress that young children should not have to deal with. Family structures were changing, the amount of quality time that parents had with their children was changing, parents were coming in more stressed and quite demanding of teachers time, children spent more time watching TV and playing computer type games than ever before, children's social skills seemed to be declining. Further discussions and the development of an action plan about how we can address this at our site as well as on a more national level.

### **Child Initiated Curriculum**

Once again the year was filled with exciting learning based on the children's interests, which took us on many a journey to the circus, to police investigations, making costumes and masks, sailing the seven seas with pirates, experimenting with scientists, inventing, creating, writing books, budding photographers, sculpture making, learning different languages, travelling around the world and exploring how our bodies work just to name a few highlights. As we travelled along the children's interests all learning together, teachers used inquiry based learning approaches, asking questions to challenge the children's thinking and to help develop learning dispositions to assist the children as life long learners and to further extend the curriculum.

As part of our self-review we made further changes to the way in which we provide information to families about children's learning. We started to display the children's learning with a Reggio Emilia approach using photographs

of the children mounted onto black cardboard with simple text that captured the children's voice and the learning that occurred.

Throughout the curriculum there was a strong focus on numeracy and mathematics, science and nature, literacy, social skills, creativity through the arts and music, community and cultures, gross and fine motor skills that were well documented throughout the children's learning stories.

The excursions and fundraisers throughout the year were based on the children's interests, which were well attended, by the children and their families. We visited our local libraries, walked to the post office and Onkaparinga Arts Gallery. Incursions included a visit from Delta Dog Safety, the police, visits to and from the transition class, parents bringing in unusual pets and sharing their talents and interests including sports, music and cooking, mmm the bread, zucchini slice, tuna bake, fruit skewers and fruit smoothies were a big hit. Once again to promote the children's creativity, sense of self and learning at Frieda Corpe Kindy we displayed the children's artwork at the Onkaparinga Arts Centre. The opening night was well attended by parents and families in the local community. Jenny Sommer our Assistant Regional Director also came to have a look through the week and was very interested in the exceptional learning at the Kindergarten. Families purchased art works; packs of the children's Ruth Tuck self-portrait cards and A4 posters. It was such a wonderful evening to see huge smiles on the children's faces as they showed their families and friends around the art centre taking them to all of their masterpieces. The children's creative talents were displayed for 2 weeks and open to the general public. Funds raised from this were put towards developing the children's digging patch area.

#### **Outcomes:**

- The children's learning was relevant and meaningful through a C.I.C and consequently deep learning occurred as documented in the children's learning stories.
- Staff continued to focus on their practices and their relationships with children that made a difference in how children approached and experienced learning, how they felt about themselves and how they interacted with others.
- Children were proud of their achievements and consider themselves as powerful learners.
- Families and the community were informed of the powerful learning that occurs at kindy.
- Staff attended PLC's around developing a new style of summative report based on the E.Y.L.F to use next year.
- Introduction of Reggio Emilia approaches which further enhanced our Child Initiated Curriculum and children's learning.

#### **Future plans**

- 2011 share information about Reggio Emilia approaches and the E.Y.L.F with Governing Council and further implement within our C.I.C.
- End of term open nights for children to share their learning with family and friends.
- Using The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia ;Belonging, Being, Becoming document for programming, mid term and summative reports, learning stories, documenting other forms of children's learning.

### [Strategic Direction 2: Improved Literacy outcomes.](#)

Target: That children routinely engage in a variety of experiences that further develop their oral language, phonological awareness, rhyming and print awareness daily.

Teaching staff revisited the series of Professional Learning on Emergent Literacy and Annette made up a wonderful display for families about pre literacy skills linking home, kindy and then later learning at school. Kerry sent information home to families about ways in which to support and develop children's literacy skills via newsletters and links to web sites.

To improve literacy outcomes one of the strategies we implemented was collaboratively working with our DECS speech therapist Michelle Hancock to develop a formal book based learning program for children that required extra support with their pre literacy skills. Children were grouped from data collected about the children's literacy, speech and language development. Each term particular books were chosen to extend the children's' literacy skills in areas that required further development. This focus included: concept work, descriptive language, levels of questioning, rhyme as well as the children's general self-confidence. Some theme based books were based on the Child Initiated Curriculum. Depending on individual children's needs some children were involved in the book based learning program with Pam our support worker while other children extended their skills in other groups with Annette and Kerry during group time.

The importance of rhyme and being able to recognise syllables in words as part of children's early literacy development was also highlighted in professional learning so staff continued to focus group time with games, songs, poems, stories and movement around these concepts. Staff also linked this in with children developing a positive sense of self and wellbeing as they enjoyed chanting self-affirming rhymes. "Have a go spaghetti" "Give it a try banana pie" "Do your best hairy chest" "Don't give in Mr Chin" "Easy peasy lemon squeezy."

The children assisted in making a special book to be able to give to new families to the centre, which captures their voice, ideas and learning about what kindergarten is all about.

Another big focus this year has been on extending children's literacy through dramatic play and the arts. The children, staff and parents celebrated Book Week by visiting the Noarlunga Library for a National Simultaneous story time "White dogs can't jump" to help promote ways of developing children's literacy skills. Staff from Noarlunga library also visited playgroup to share information and role model ways in how to help develop young children's and babies pre literacy skills through music, songs and books.

As part of our Child Initiated Curriculum we further explored the children's interest in puppets and went on two excursions to theatre productions by the Patch Theatre Company. "Me and My Shadow" which captured

children's imaginations via use of paper bags and lighting to explore shadows. "Sharon Keep ya hair on" focused on music, movement and rhyme to extend children's literacy.

We also organised Sue Harris a fantastic puppeteer to visit the kindy. Her performance "I'm feeling fine, how are you?" focussed on children's emotions, self-regulating emotions, protective behaviour skills and how to play with puppets.

#### **Outcomes:**

- With children that had been assessed as having speech and language difficulties and processing difficulties staff engaged in small group work with them and promoted peer modelling which positively extended the children's language and literacy development. They also received one on one support to practice their skills with Pam our support worker. All of the children that received one to one support with an educator increased their pre literacy skills.
- On average 97% of the children that were in their final term of kindy were able to confidently rhyme and sound out syllables. Children that had moderate to severe language disorders were not ready for this stage in their literacy development but extended their vocabulary, language skills and speech.
- Children that were observed to have well developed pre-literacy skills were extended through open ended activities and explicit teaching that encouraged children to challenge and develop their skills further through making books, copying words and sentences, making labels, sharing story books with their peers, assisting other peers with collaboratively engaging in dramatic play, peer modelling and helping to type their words/stories on the computer.
- Children further developed their conversation language, creativity skills and social skills as they made and engaged in play with puppets. They also experienced the sheer joy of puppetry as a self-expression and means of making sense of their world.

#### **Recommendations**

- With an increased number of children with special needs as well as speech and language needs and with the cut back in hours of support that our site was given staff initially found it extremely challenging to consistently run the book based learning program. I utilized the attendance initiative grant to employ Pam for extra hours to run the book based program, which also encouraged parents to bring their children regularly so they didn't miss out on the program.
- I wrote to our local member of parliament expressing concerns around the inadequate amount of capped funding for support for children with special needs, the lack of skilled permanent support workers and the added amount of stress this has had on staff particularly this year.

#### **Future plans:**

- Next year depending on the needs of the children we will look into running a book based learning program again in conjunction with our speech pathologist to increase the children's speech and language development and support their regular attendance.
- We will continue to focus on rhyming, metalinguistics awareness, syllable recognition, oral sentences, levels of questioning and phonetic and print awareness to support children's pre literacy skills as we have had very positive feedback from our local reception teacher regarding the children's literacy development.
- To further extend and promote children's social conversational language we will 1/ Develop more dramatic play prop boxes based on the children's interests. 2/ The centre also purchased one of Sue Harris' Australian Animal cd's that we will use next year. It instructs children and adults on how to use/ play with puppets using conversation language and songs. It will also further develop the children's social and emotional skills as they observe body language in relation to emotions and then convey this understanding through the movement of their puppets.

### **Strategic Direction 3: Enhancing the Learning Environment.**

**Target:** That staff, children and parents collaboratively learn and work together to develop the natural outdoor garden that will encourage children to engage in meaningful play based experiences.

#### **Professional Learning:**

- Kerry attended an Early Childhood Forum on the Value of Outdoor Play Spaces by Ric McConaghy.
- DECS Outdoor Kit- readings and research articles on play spaces.
- Reggio Emilia training- Utilizing natural resources in children's learning through play.

#### **Actions:**

- Staff and the Governing Council researched natural play spaces for children.
- Director sourced guidelines and safety regulations in regards to DECS sites, developing playgrounds and planting trees and bushes.
- Staff explored Reggio Emilia ideas in creating play spaces for young children.- visited other sites, attended training and development in outdoor play spaces, researched on the web.
- Director developed a questionnaire that enabled staff to capture children's ideas for the outdoor play space.
- Director researched appropriate trees, bushes that are indigenous to the area and would encourage native fauna back to the area.

## **Outcomes:**

- An added play space was added by having clear blinds put up and perspex under the veranda which enclosed the area making it weather proof and usable throughout the year. It has also helped to protect the children's bags and information pockets.
- New wooden lockers were purchased and installed to house the children's belongings.
- The vegetable garden continues to flourish with the children's tender care and interest in healthy eating.
- Thomas won a worm farm for the kindy from the Onkaparinga Council with his entry of a fish made from recyclable materials.
- A new front pergola was built to add shade when gardening and to beautify the area.
- The grounds were professionally surveyed with thanks to Phil Boulden and sent to a landscape designer.
- Old disease ridden trees were removed and replaced with beautiful pittosporum trees acting as a lovely green screen that will enclose our grounds and beautify the area.
- Staff visited other sites to gather ideas with a focus on redeveloping the grounds with natural play spaces.
- Staff sourced materials from various web sites, the DECS outdoor kit, professional development with Ric Conway.
- Children shared their ideas for their outdoor kindy environment through a questionnaire and drawings.
- Staff incorporated children's ideas into the learning environment. Having more flowers, butterflies in the garden, more gardening in the vegetable garden, lots of grass, more dress ups outside, keep the swings, digging in the mud.
- The children helped to plant their garden including flowering bushes, and have excitedly watered the pittosporums each day.
- A new shed was purchased and will be erected in the holidays to beautify the garden and to enable more equipment to be purchased and stored appropriately according to O.H.S&W.
- The children excitedly helped to carry all of their equipment and toys from the shed to a temporary storage area in the literacy room in preparation for the new shed, which strengthened their ownership and pride of their kindy.
- The old shed was removed by Scott Walker and a donation given to the kindy which has helped the kindy financially.
- The children's digging patch has also been redesigned and will be developed over the Christmas holidays by Phil Selby.
- The bark under the equipment was topped up according to O.H.S&W guidelines with thanks to staff, parents and children's muscle power.
- Staff attended Reggio Emilia training in Sydney and collaboratively shared resources with sites from around Australia developing further knowledge and ideas.
- Staff have joined a Reggio Emilia PLC (Professional Learning Community)
- The Art Show and Disco fundraisers were well supported by families and raised over \$2000 which will go towards developing the children's outdoor play stage early next year.
- With very disappointing results from trying to communicate unsuccessfully with a highly recommended interstate children's play space designer staff chose to save the kindergarten money and design the grounds with the Management Committee using the knowledge gained over the year and the children's ideas. Phil Selby was sourced to carry out the ideas.
- Play Quip came and assessed the condition of the playground and swings. The swings were updated and the equipment has been noted to be safe within regulations for the time in which they were built. It was noted that if any changes were made to the equipment that it would not fall within current guidelines and would cost the kindy approx \$30,000.
- A new play area has been designed based on the children's interests. It will be paved early next year, bushes have been planted to form a hedge that will give the children a feeling of being hidden away and a definite entrance to respect the play space. Natural materials such as sticks and small pebbles will be added to the area for the children to create with, a large tree for shade and a ruin like fireplace to extend the children's imagination.
- A new sign with the centres values has been made and will be erected in the new year with anti-graffiti paint and will be set back within the kindy grounds.
- The children all participated in drawing pictures of themselves within the Frieda Corpe Community which is now displayed in frames by the entrance of the kindy. It helped develop their sense of self, confidence and feeling of belonging.
- New wooden and natural resources were purchased and gathered to support the program.
- Kerry has spoken with the council about planting trees on the verge to beautify the area that runs along Benny ave.
- Maintenance of the garden has been with thanks to Gary and Jack Sutton.
- The lawn has been cored, debugged and fed to keep it healthy and will be added to our maintenance plan so that we are able to keep the lawn which was at risk of dying with continual well loved use.

## **Recommendations:**

It has taken the good part of this year to gather all of the information we have required to design the children's play space and to raise money to be able to build it. We set out to complete this over a two year period so we are well on our way.

## **Future plans**

Fundraise to build the children's play stage that has been designed by Phil Selby, planting the large tree in the new play space, more prop boxes developed for dramatic play outside, purchasing appropriate shelving

for the shed, sourcing a wooden boat to be erected near the sandpit, planting of more bushes to attract butterflies into the garden,

## EMERGING PRIORITIES

### **Strategic Direction 4: To improve attendance patterns of children enrolled at the centre.**

Targets: All children will attend kindy regularly.

This year by utilizing our attendance initiative money we were able to increase our support worker hours so that the program could be accessed successfully by all of our children.

#### **Outcomes:**

- The majority of children attended regularly. The three children that did not attend regularly was due to family's choice and extenuating circumstances relating to special needs.
- Children had quality care and education.
- Families had access to a full day without increased costs.
- Families had flexibility in initial session choices.
- Most children attended their full amount of sessions.
- Staff worked hard to encourage daily attendance by:
  - -promoting attendance through newsletters
  - -through incidental and planned conversations with parents
  - -phone calls to families
  - -interactions with other support agencies
- The book based learning program was able to continue which assisted children with speech and language difficulties.
- Parents promoted the kindy by word of mouth, and we are now at capacity for the second year running.
- Staff kept a daily record of attendance by marking the roll and monitored changes.
- The staff, Parent Voice and families collaboratively developed the centres values that makes Frieda Corpe Kindergarten the unique learning environment that it is. (These values are currently being made into a new kindergarten sign that adds to the professional outlook of the centre and expectations of attending kindy regularly just like school.)

#### **Recommendations:**

- To continue to promote regular attendance and its importance for children's wellbeing, learning and development.
- To continue to reflect on current practice and make changes that support children's mental health and wellbeing.
- To continue to employ current staff members to be able to offer high quality education and care that focuses on Child Initiated Learning which Frieda Corpe Kindy is renowned for. "A model centre of excellence."

#### **Future plans**

Changes to the children's sessions (based on data collected from the Kids Matter project and parent questionnaires) to support their wellbeing and increase attendance. Please refer to Kids Matter Project for further information.

Discussions: With the future implementation of 15hours how can we continue to provide important programs such as pre entry and playgroup that parents and staff value as important transitions for children's wellbeing?

*Our growth and development can be measured in many different ways along our individual learning journeys.*



"I am doing oms, it's relaxing."



"Team work."



Developing self-confidence and relationships with peers.

	2008				2009				2010			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Attendances	33	32	37	47	49	48	54	59	64	70	61	
Enrolments	43	38	43	48	50	49	54	60	66	68	62	

The noticeable increase of attendance during 2009 and 2010 has been because of the strategies that we put into place i.e. increase staffing, utilizing the attendance money that was allocated to the centre. We were able to offer families' flexibility in sessions as well as full days with free lunch care. Data has shown that many children attend for 1 full day and two half days or two full days with most children accessing their full entitlements. We expect to continue seeing these great results into next year with the change in sessions to two full days which data has shown to be the most popular choice for families.

Future plans have involved discussing options with parents and the Management Committee in implementing the 15 hours of preschool by the year 2013 and what this might look like and mean for the Frieda Corpe families and community. Consultation and discussions with our playgroup families and our local school have already begun in preparation for next year as the playgroups are over capacity limits. We value positive transitions into the kindy environment and suggestions have been put forward by the playgroup co-ordinators on behalf of our families as to how we maintain this.

The new Parent Voice will need to develop a priority of access policy for playgroup to ensure safety guidelines are adhered to.

## PARENT OPINION SURVEY

A total of 18 parents responded to the Parent Opinion Survey, which was distributed in terms 1 and 3. The return rate was most disappointing which we will have to review and improve on for next year. Going on the results that we did get, they showed a high level of satisfaction in most areas. The areas that some parents commented on with a neutral response were around sharing children's development with families and parental involvement, so these became our areas for improvement.

We collected data around how many families were borrowing the children's portfolios that have learning stories and disposition pages that capture the children's learning journey. Only ¼ of the families actually borrowed the folders, parents shared that they preferred to look at them at kindy so they didn't get lost at home and other families said they usually forgot to look and didn't have time. We observed that it was the children that enjoyed getting out their folders and sharing it with other peers or using it as self reflection and self affirming of their skills and learning.

In conjunction with our goal setting in Kids Matter we focused on improving our relationship building with parents. Staff put strategies in place so that every parent over a particular time period had a one to one conversation with a staff member about their child's development. This continued over the rest of the year so that parents had numerous conversations with staff about their child's development and learning journey. With parents that we didn't often see phone calls were shared. Mid term reports were continued in forms of written information or verbal conversations and teachers redesigned the Summative report.

From parent feedback I have also changed the structure to the parent enrolment meeting for next year and instead of individual enrolments I have sent out the enrolment form to families to fill out in their own time and return to kindy before the end of the year. Parents have then been invited to stay at kindy on the first Friday of the term when Pre entry begins and I will run a group parent information session about the centre. Handouts and information will be provided to take home and share with other family members. I am hoping that this will give families a chance to meet each other, start to establish a sense of community and to feel comfortable to ask as many questions as needed. This will allow more time to be able to share the centres values and the many ways that parents can be collaboratively involved in the centre to support children's wellbeing and learning.

Unfortunately with the special needs of some of our children this year when we tried to have parents stay at kindy and help it was not having a positive effect on some of the children's wellbeing due to their confusion and anxieties around separating from their own parents. We asked parents about other ways in which they might like to help and involved parents through Governing Council, excursions, social family events- disco, art show, open night, helping to gather resources and bringing in interests from home.

Analysis of parent comments from the surveys also highlighted that parents highly value and recognise the quality of teaching and learning at Frieda Corpe Kindergarten.

Parents commented, "Frieda Corpe Kindergarten is an excellent introduction to schooling and your hard work and caring manner make it such a great place." "What a wonderful experience and the very best start to his learning journey." "...Has absolutely loved this year at kindy, doing all of the fun things, learning, learning and more learning, he has really thrived as a person."

We always appreciate parent's opinions as we always strive to improve on practices and value honest feedback. Next year our goal will be to explore how we can get even more parent involvement on the Parent Voice (Governing Council) and once again how we can further improve on sharing information and children's learning with all families.