



PRESCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 19/7/2020

Centre name: **MOUNT BARKER KINDERGARTEN**

Centre number: **4637**

1. General information

- **Preschool Director:** Mandy Smith
- **Location/Postal address:** 2b Dumas Street, Mount Barker SA 5251
- **Telephone number:** (08) 8339 3181
- **Fax number:** (08) 8370 1057
- **Kindergarten website address:** <http://www.mtbarkerkgn.sa.edu.au>
- **Kindergarten e-mail address:** dl.4637.leaders@schools.sa.edu.au
- **Preschool Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/Mount-Barker-Kindergarten-and-Gigglebugs-Playgroup-100164488340871/>
- **Partnership:** Heysen
- **Geographical location:** 40km from the Adelaide GPO
- **Enrolment/Attendance:** 64 children
- **Co-located/stand-alone:** Stand-alone site

Programs operating at the preschool

- ❖ **Sessional Kindergarten** for eligible children averaging 15 hours per week (including Universal Access) – traditionally a Monday-Tuesday and a Wednesday-Thursday group with flexible options available. Parents provide healthy snacks and lunch for their children
- ❖ **Occasional Care** (unfunded) - for children aged from 3 years and six months - subject to vacancies
- ❖ **Transition** – Programs are in place to ensure a gradual and positive transition to kindergarten and on to primary school for each child and family
- ❖ **Preschool and Bilingual Support** – according to individual need
- ❖ **Playgroup** – open to the broader community each Friday morning during term-time - facilitated by an educator

2. Key Centre Policies

- **Centre Priorities:**

Please refer to our current Quality Improvement Plan

- **Policies and Procedures:**

Key site policies and procedures are available on our website. A complete set of our current policies and procedures is available to view at the kindergarten.

- **Philosophy Statement**

Mount Barker Kindergarten provides a safe, inclusive environment that is vibrant, flexible and responsive to each child's interest, needs and abilities as individuals and in groups. We provide high quality teaching and learning in line with the *National Quality Framework*, based on the Principles, Practices and Outcomes of the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

This philosophy reflects our vision and motto, **Play, Learn, Grow**:

Play - we implement a play-based curriculum, focused on positive social interactions and wellbeing. Play enables children to make independent choices using open-ended resources, enhancing individual development.

Learn - our emergent curriculum is responsive to children's learning ideas, utilising teachable moments and building upon children's interests and existing understandings. We respect each child's individual learning style in tandem with developmental appropriateness.

Grow - we provide learning opportunities that challenge and engage children, supporting deeper thinking and problem solving as they understand and make sense of the world around them.

Our educators work in partnership with families, recognising and valuing their place as children's first educators. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and their culture. We increasingly build partnerships with our extended community (including parents, caregivers, children, local businesses, service providers, child care centres and children's groups).

This philosophy defines our values of **Trust** and **Respect**, **Nurturing** and **Caring**, **Responsibility** and **Empowerment**, which are the foundation of quality early childhood education:

Trust and **Respect** - children gain increasing confidence to further develop their own identity while exploring and taking considered learning risks.

Nurturing and **Caring** - children learn about empathy and consideration for others. They develop a sense of what is fair, begin to see alternate points of view, and act in respectful and inclusive ways.

Responsibility and **Empowerment** - children strengthen their ability initiate their own interactions and accept some responsibility for themselves, their actions and their environments.

As educators, we are committed to ongoing critical reflection that improves our everyday practice, thereby continuing to provide quality care and education. Our team values are:

open communication; being supportive; shared commitment in working towards common goals; and an overarching positive attitude to work and life-long learning.

3. Curriculum

- **Curriculum Documents Used:**
 - ❖ Belonging Being Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
 - ❖ Preschool Indicators of Numeracy and Literacy
 - ❖ Respect Reflect Relate
- **Specific Curriculum Approaches**
 - ❖ Cycle of Planning – ongoing cyclic reflective planning, implementation and assessment of the curriculum.
 - ❖ Emergent Program – responds to the strengths and interests of each child, drawing on their prior knowledge and family experiences.
 - ❖ Child Voice – provides opportunities for children to actively direct their own learning independently and in collaboration with their peers.
- **Joint Programs/Special Curriculum Projects**
 - ❖ Literacy and Numeracy focus
 - ❖ Nature Inquiry and Sustainability
 - ❖ Garden to Kitchen
 - ❖ Aboriginal Perspectives
 - ❖ Visual and Performing Arts
 - ❖ Open-ended construction
 - ❖ Buddy Class and Sign Language with the local Primary School
- **Partnerships with Families**

Upon commencing kindergarten, each child's family is asked to complete a questionnaire detailing their child's interests, strengths, hope for kindergarten and areas for further developing. Our teachers use this as an early resource in determining future directions for each child. During Term 2 parents are offered the opportunity for an interview to talk with a teacher about their child's development at kindergarten. *Our teaching staff are always willing to speak with families about successes, issues and concerns, formally or informally as appropriate throughout the year.*

A learning journal is developed with each child during their time at kindergarten, providing a collection of children's artwork, their literacy and numeracy projects, photographs and kindergarten experiences. A **Statement of Learning** is presented to the child and their family prior at the end of the kindergarten year. This document is shared with the appropriate school with parental consent.

4. Centre Based Staff

- **Staff Profile**

- ❖ Director (1.0)
- ❖ Teacher (1.2) - two part-time teachers
- ❖ Early Childhood Worker (1.0)
- ❖ Preschool Support (as required)
- ❖ Regular Relief Staff

Staffing is based on enrolments. We are presently staffed on a 1:11 ratio. Every effort is made to ensure continuity of staff to enhance positive relationships with children and families along with the efficient operation of the kindergarten.

- **Performance Management Program**

Performance reviews, aligned to the site's Quality Improvement Plan and individual educators' personal goals, are conducted bi-annually.

- **Access to Special Support Staff**

Access to free specialist services is available through the kindergarten (including a speech therapist, psychologist, social worker, bi-lingual educators and additional educational support). A negotiated education plan is developed and documented for all children with additional support requirements to ensure their optimum participation in the preschool program.

- **Other**

Adelaide Hills Community Health Services offer a range of information and services which staff and parents may access.

Health checks for 4 year olds conducted by Child Youth Health nurses are available for all families on-site.

5. Centre Facilities

- **Buildings and Grounds**

The Kindergarten is located in the heart of Mount Barker, on a bus route and adjacent to the SA Dental Clinic and Mount Barker Primary School.

Our large natural outdoor play environment invites open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and a deeper connection with nature. There is space for ball games, a mud kitchen, quiet spaces, climbing areas, a vegetable garden, fruit trees and large shaded areas. We have ready access the adjacent bushland which provides a quiet, natural environment for wellbeing and inquiry learning.

The indoor area has ample room for a wide variety of learning stations including writing, reading, numeracy, art, and construction. The area is well lit

with ample natural light. Our playhouse building provides a spacious versatile area for group gatherings, large-scale projects, dance and movement, and indoor activities during inclement weather.

- **Capacity**

Physical capacity currently capped at 60 children per session.

- **Centre Ownership**

The Department for Education.

- **Access for Children and Staff with Disabilities**

Facilities and equipment ensuring access for those with disabilities are provided on a case-by-case basis according to individuals' identified needs. The site is accessible for wheel chairs.

6. Local Community

- **General Characteristics**

Mount Barker continues to be a growing community due to the ongoing opening of new land developments. Originally a farming community famous for its wheat production. The Mount Barker CBD continues to develop as the population increases and new businesses move into the area. Mount Barker is a diverse socio-economic area inclusive of families from a variety of backgrounds, culture and languages.

- **Parent and Community Involvement in the Kindergarten**

The kindergarten welcomes community involvement. Families are encouraged to become actively involved in their child's learning. We invite parents to stay or drop in during sessions and encourage families to share their culture, hobbies or interest with the children. Parents actively participate in management of the centre through the Governing Council.

We work in close partnership with other kindergartens and schools within our partnership and the broader hills area. We are proud of the extended transition and buddy programs we have developed collaboratively with our neighbour Mount Barker Primary School.

- **Other Local Care and Education Facilities**

Children may also attend local community or private child care services and family day care.

- **Commercial/Industrial and Shopping Facilities**

Mount Barker has a large shopping precinct with easy access to surrounding areas. A large industrial estate is located to the east of Mount Barker that caters to many local businesses.

- **Other Local Facilities**

Mount Barker has a large range of medical, sporting and recreational facilities including: hospital; a number of medical clinics; 7 day chemist; post office; public library; public and private schools (primary and secondary); TAFE college; recreation centre; public swimming pool; cinema complex; recreation complex; restaurants/cafes/hotels; bus and taxi services; golf course; wet lands; and walking trails.

- **Availability of Staff Housing**

Major growth in housing with rental opportunities available.

- **Accessibility**

Mount Barker Kindergarten is located close to the town centre and services. 40 minutes from the Adelaide CBD, easy access by freeway. Located on a bus route - with a park and ride service in Dumas Street.

- **Local Government**

District Council of Mount Barker.

7. Further Comments

- The kindergarten was established in 1981. Many families who have accessed the kindergarten themselves as a children now bring their own children along.
- The kindergarten community rely heavily on fundraising, donations and payment of fees to maintain adequate quality resources for learning through play.
- As Mount Barker Kindergarten is located in a high bushfire risk areas, we will be **CLOSED** on declared **CATASTROPHIC DAYS**.