### Context

**Preschool Name:** Hallett Cove Karrara Kindergarten  
**Preschool Number:** 3645  
**Preschool Director:** Maddy Stewardson  
**Region:** Southern Adelaide

Hallett Cove Karrara Kindergarten is a large attractive kindergarten set within well-maintained and equipped grounds in Hallett Cove. It is well respected within the community and in 2011 approx. 30% of families had already had children enrolled in the past, many having experienced several different leaders and teachers at the site over the years. The majority of children go to the local government school and through this association the site has maintained a strong focus in the community. 2011 saw a totally new staff team appointed to the site after a period of significant uncertainly in enrolments and subsequent displacement of teachers. For the first time in the sites history it was being classed as “part-time” and this cultural shift was hard-felt by this community. This year the focus has been to establish and maintain a vibrant and skilled parent group who are committed to managing changing situations with optimism, and the knowledge of how they can move their centre forward. We have begun this journey in earnest.

### Quality Improvement Plan

There were two main priorities set to focus on in 2011. These were to focus on building children’s literacy competence and to develop respectful, reciprocal and supportive relationships within the kindergarten and the community.

**Priority 1 – Building children’s literacy competence**  
Through socio dramatic (pretend) play children will develop greater skills to communicate their understanding, feelings and ideas using oral language and symbols. This play-based symbolism forms the foundation for later use of letters and numbers to read and write to convey meaning.

**Intended outcomes:**

- Demonstrate improvement in children’s understanding and use of symbols in play to convey meaning.
- Strengthen inclusivity in learning experiences.

**Targets and Strategies:**

- High level of involvement (Level 4/5) for all children in symbolic play on the RRR Engagement Scales. - **Achieved**
- Improvement in Involvement Scale level from term 2- term 4. **Achieved**
- ILP and informal assessments will show increased involvement in socio dramatic play using language and/ symbolic play. **Achieved**

Dramatic play with its strong ability to promote symbolic play was a large focus throughout the year and programming focused on making it a central part of the kindergarten and incorporating it in as many areas as possible. A key feature to this was making sure that children had time to become deeply engaged in play, with limited interruptions. In addition we made sure that they had the skills to see what the play was, enter play successfully, manage the social interactions within this play appropriately and then move it to a more sophisticated level over time. While this desire to help children engage more deeply with dramatic play was observed and reflected upon through planning generally, we also collected clear and unbiased data using the Involvement Scales of the Reflect, Respect and Relate document. By combining this professional reflection with observation data we could quantify the quality of children’s play as individuals and as a group of children. We gained excellent baseline data to show where children were and where they moved to in their play. In addition we made several changes to our teaching practices and resources to facilitate greater access to play for all children and to extend their use of symbols.
During the year we ensured that there were many play spaces which were clearly “pretend play areas” as this made it clearer to the less skilled children the kind of play that could happen there. It drew on common play scenarios to begin with and then through resourcing and targeted adult interaction play extended to become more ‘pretend’ and therefore challenging, as children had to use their imaginations creatively to further the play. We provided resources that were very realistic as well as less obvious resources which could be use in more symbolic ways. We also focused on encouraging children to link play areas and transfer resources and materials between play areas to add complexity to the play. We kept regular observations of children’s interests and needs which ensured their ideas were listened to and responded to quickly in the curriculum. This was very empowering to the children. To compliment the pretend/ symbolic play we focused strongly on the oral language needed to enter and be part of this rich form of play and worked with individuals to create “play scripts” with appropriate language which would help them access the curriculum. For some children this was identified in their Individual Learning Plans and supported by speech pathologists and preschool support. Critical to the success of this approach was communicating with parents about the value in play and how this underpins the skills required for reading, writing and numeracy. Parents were involved within the curriculum as players themselves and information was shared through newsletters, displays and community events where the links between pretend play and literacy were explained and highlighted.

Out data from the Involvement Scales showed a clear improvement in children’s involvement in symbolic play. While the group as a whole improved from an average level of 3.4-4.2 (with 5.0 being the maximum) the most noticeable difference was that, of the 10 children observed (25% of the kindergarten), all children were observed engaging with symbolic play at a level 5 at some point. While the purpose of this approach is to collect a general sample of improvement, it was exciting to observe that for certain individuals there was improvement from below level 3 to level 5. The greatest individual improvements were in children who were less socially skilled or had communication difficulties who had new access to play where more sophisticated play was modeled by their peers and teaching was targeted at being inclusive of all. Its is exciting to note as well, that we saw a much greater increase in amount of level 5 involvement in all areas of play. However, as we were only assessing “symbolic” play this excluded the many examples of rich and deeply involved play by children from the data collection, but we observed how our approach was benefitting all areas of the program. In addition, children’s self assessments showed an increasing ability to explain that symbols “stand” for something else and how this relates to reading and writing. Each term we embedded these goals in the broader curriculum and through our focus on Friendship in term 3 and Symbols in term 4 particularly children demonstrated increasing skill in using symbols in play and for communicating with others in writing and with numbers. The most exciting part of this learning was the way it was shared and supported by families at home though our 2 “Home Projects”. In term one children designed and presented a large poster of their favorite “Home-made” recipe. These colorful recipes were “read” by each child to the larger group and discussed. In term 3 children did a “friendship challenge” where they interviewed up to 10 members of their family about their friendships as children. We received 130 individual responses! They recorded these conversations on notes and returned to kindy to tell the group about them. This created a mass of information about what makes a good friend and encouraged different views of friendships, modeled the language of friendship and opened up opportunities for children to present their understanding with talking and writing. Our Home-made Project was completed by 88% of the children in the kindergarten and our friendship challenge by 78%. By involving the children and families in the sites priority we created an energy about learning which lead to amazing results for our children.

Moving into 2012 –

- Continuing our focus on improving children’s literacy competence through a focus on socio dramatic play, oral language, social skills and use of print.
- Developing a shared understanding of this with a new staff team will be critical along side evaluating the centre’s dramatic play kits; re-stocking and developing these.
- Explore an opportunity for a research project around language and play with DECD speech pathologists and / or explore our work around transition/ continuity of learning with our feeder school.
Priority 2 – Relationships
Develop respectful and supportive relationships within the kindergarten and community to manage the change in circumstances and facilitate ongoing learning for all.

Intended outcomes:
- Assess and strengthen respectful, reciprocal and supportive relationships with children, families, staff and the broader community.
- Establish a culture of thinking and planning which reflects the needs of all members through its actions.

Targets and Strategies:
- High level of involvement relationships (Level 4/5) are observed and measured using the RRR Relationships Scales between children and adults in the centre. **Achieved**
- Data from term 2 to term 4 RRR Scales shows improvement in the quality of relationships between children and adults. **Achieved**
- Assessment and reporting processes will enhance relationships between children, staff and families through the sharing of information. **Achieved**

In 2011 our key goal was for staff to become part of the kindergarten and develop positive relationships with the community which fostered high level involvement by families and engagement by children. Our main approach to this was to invite the families in, regularly and in different ways to engage with what we were doing. We did this through events, the curriculum and by having a very open and welcoming manner in sessions. We sought ideas and feedback regularly and this was acted on and resourced throughout the year. In addition we acted on suggestions and priorities which had been established in the years prior, including planning for and funding the ongoing updating and general improvement to the look and safety of the site and the functionality of the outdoor area. It was clear that the look of the kindergarten was as strong draw card and influenced parents decisions to enroll their children in the site. The long-term results of this focus will lead to more stable enrolments and stability in sessions. Parents readily engaged in thinking about new improvements for the site and contributed their time, resources and fundraising money to the projects throughout the year.

The cornerstone for successfully managing this transition in teachers and leader was the Governing Council who embraced the time of change and used their initiative and care for the kindy to plan for the future. As a result of enrolment fluctuations the site was faced with possible session cuts in term 3 and this could have destabilized the site. However, during the year the Governing Council were well informed about both the reasons for the possible change and how they could help. They understood the financial and community implications of their decisions and took their role seriously in deciding the best path forward. They were proactive in managing this risk. Through very successful fundraising (aimed at self funding sessions if needed) and community effort to build enrolments through word of mouth we gained several new enrolments at a critical time which avoided this change. Parents are confident in the leadership of the site and see that this has been possible because the whole staff works together, communicates well and works collaboratively with families providing flexibility when required.

Early in 2011 it became clear that it would be useful to establish some initial data about how well we related to the children. Although we had verbal confirmation that families were happy we wanted to dig deeper into how well we were doing so that we could improve. We used the Relationships Scales firstly to identify ways in which relationships could be described and assessed and observed each other in our interactions with children. We observed 4 staff’s interactions with 10 children and over 3 days to gain a snapshot of the quality of our interactions. We repeated this during term 4. Initial data showed that our relationships were at an average of level 4. On closer examination we were able to make suggestions for building closer relationships with individual children. We put strategies in place to ensure there was time for relationships to develop and this included moving areas of the
kindergarten around so they were more accessible and releasing teachers from broader responsibility for the learning area to be able to stay still, at a specific learning activity, to take the time to talk and listen to children. In our art show in term 2 parents were amazed at how much information we could share about every child, and their thoughts’ about their artwork, which was gained through conversation with them while they were painting. In addition, we targeted transition times to approach and talk with quieter children. In term 4 our data showed that our average was 4.5 and that all children were experiencing high level (level 5) relationships with staff on more than one observed occasion. This positive environment was reflected in the parent satisfaction surveys at the end of the year where every parent wrote positively about how we related to their child. While we aimed to show high level (level 4/5) relationships with children in the sample we were most impressed with the improvement of individual relationships from term 1 to term 4 and our anecdotal evidence shows that this extends to the larger group as well.

As a new staff team it has been critical to quickly establish a shared vision for working with our children and develop systems and actions that support that. During 2011 the site started using the Early Years Learning Framework for all planning and assessment of children’s learning. This was new to 2 out of the 3 staff and so most non contact time and training and development was targeted at developing understanding of this document. Part of this process was to release the teachers for a day during the year to review and improve the assessment and reporting methods. We have started developing a new format that builds a picture of each child over their year at kindergarten, incorporating Individual Learning Plans, a learning portfolio and a summative statement. These changes have allowed staff to connect the documentation we want to show parents to the new Early Years Learning Framework so that it is consistent and covers all areas of the Framework. Initial feedback from parents has been positive about the introduction of the Individual Learning Plans twice a year and there was strong positive feedback about the quality of the summative reports. In general all parents are very happy with the information they are getting about their children’s learning and most mention the conversations they have with staff as being vital. We had a very large response to the Parent Preschool Survey which shows overwhelmingly that parents strongly agree with statements about how useful they find the information sharing in the kindergarten and that this affects their overall satisfaction with the service. As the emphasis on documenting children’s learning changes with the introduction of the National Quality Standard and the move to a single intake (and therefore exit) draws near, it is important to maintain this satisfaction when all children require the same things at the same time. In reality the opportunities to do this will be impacted by the increased teaching hours in Universal Access.

Moving into 2012 –

- Developing the assessment and reporting methods used to allow for authentic documentation of children’s learning so that it provides ongoing information that informs planning and gives parents the information they need. This will build on the work done in 2011.
- Continue to develop a closer connection with local school based around shared resources and learning opportunities which will intimately support transition for children between sites
- Continue to focus on building relationships within the kindergarten by supporting the extra services we offer, eg playgroup, and being flexible to parents needs with sessions.
- Maintain open and honest communication with the community through the core of the Governing Council to manage the change to Universal Access.

Events and achievement in 2011 -

- Community Events each term: “Home-made” lunch, Grandparents day lunch and bookweek celebration, Art show, End of year Picnic.
- AGM Movie and Popcorn night
- Home-made Project (Home to Kindy Project)
- Friendship Project (Home to Kindy Project)
- Garage Sale
- Excursion to see Patch Theatre to see Mr McGee and the biting flee
- Excursion to the Museum
- Indigenous cultural workshop (incursion)
Visits from Hallett Cove East Primary School

Successful transition to a totally new staff team.

Election of a governing council of 17 people representing community members, playgroup and past and current families.

Implementation and improvement in use of the Early Years Learning Framework and Reflect, Respect, Relate to assess and improve learning outcomes for children.

Development of an assessment and reporting process which optimizes ongoing learning and supports transition to school.

Successful management of centre budget to maintain a high quality learning environment and also to facilitate large outdoor development and to provide for staffing contingencies if numbers fluctuated.

Preparation to comply with regulations from National Quality Standards- consultation with families.

Upgrade of the outdoor area as per 5 Year plan (all site funded)

Gradual increase in eligible enrolment from term to term.

Increase in size and regularity of Playgroup

Successful completion of Department Self Review Process (Validation)

Increased contact with local feeder school and main Independent School.

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Report from the Chairperson of the Governing Council

2011 started with much uncertainty as an entirely new staffing team were introduced to the kindergarten. The community waited with anticipation to see what influence the new teaching team would have on the running of our site and ultimately, the affect this would have on our children and their learning. I am very pleased to be able to say that the staff rose to the challenge set out for them and quickly formed excellent relationships with each other, the children and parents. This made for an apparently seamless transition into Term 1, with a strong focus on understanding what parents wanted from the kindergarten and what could be improved.

This interaction with families resulted in a very high attendance at the AGM, which in turn resulted in a Governing Council with an incredible 17 members! It was exciting to see so many families supporting the kindergarten and taking the opportunity to be actively involved in the running, planning and development of the site. There were many decisions to be made over the year, especially in regards to sessions and funding, but also surrounding learning goals and site improvement. It was great to hear from the teaching team that the learning goals (building literacy competence and developing respectful, reciprocal and supportive relationships) set at the start of the year were met - and surpassed in many areas. As a parent, I was particularly impressed with the children’s Individual Learning Plans. While the overall education of my child was never in doubt, it was reassuring to know that the staff understood my child for who he is, his strengths and his weaknesses, and how best to interact with him in order for him to accomplish his individual goals.

The efforts of the Governing Council and families to fundraising should not go without a mention, with many members committing time, effort and enthusiasm into raising a fantastic amount of money for the site. It was rewarding to see this effort pay off by not only improving the outdoor play area and purchasing some great climbing equipment, but by having the ability to offer self funded sessions, so as to maintain the flexibility of sessions as requested by the kindergarten families and the wider community. I have no doubt that this flexibility is part of the reason that enrolments have picked up and our kindergarten goes from strength to strength.

As we enter 2012 I am once again in the fortunate position of being the Kindergarten’s Chairperson. It is truly an honour to be part of such a fantastic community and I look forward to being part of everything the Kindergarten has to offer my family this year,

Jo Marnes
Student Data

Enrolments

This year full time enrolments have steadily increased from term 1-4: 37, 40, 41, 50. There is a larger cohort during term 4 each year as this included those children who may already be 5, but are not able to attend their non-government school until the January of the following year. Our average for the year is just over 43.5. Our pre-entries appear to replace the existing number of children with a slight over all increase. This average allows us to manage the size of the sessions without any being over crowded. This allows parents to choose between half and full days and choose between quieter nad busier sessions as we can be flexible with our ECW funding.

Attendance

We have maintained an excellent attendance level this year with no less than 94% in data weeks, and often more in other weeks. We have very strongly promoted the need for children to attend regularly and the implications of this for their learning as well as for our ongoing staffing levels. The families have listened to us and have ensured their children attend regularly throughout all the year.
### Feeder Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination School</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallett Cove East Primary</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin de Pores School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Teresa’s School Brighton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise Christian School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christie Downs Schools</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcroft College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallett Cove School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Park Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate Govt</td>
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<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Govt Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Govt Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of our children attend the local primary school which is within walking distance from the kindergarten. We have endeavored to make closer ties with this school during the year and are planning to continue our supported transition visits in 2012 as part of the process. We have also encouraged the reception classes to come and play at the kindy as a way to consolidate this relationship with the school. St Martins continue to be our main non government school and our reputation with these families was boosted during this year with many families from that school promoting our kindergarten.
Client Opinion

This year we surveyed the families in a variety of ways including the Parent Opinion Survey. We had a terrific response with 30 out of 44 being returned. Below is a summary of the results. In addition, we surveyed families twice specifically about learning and outcomes, through children’s Individual Learning Plans 1 and 2 which required adult feedback and suggestions. We also gathered in-depth information about our site review processes via the Validation Process in the area of Attending to Culture. This process showed that many of our goals for creating a positive culture within the site are at either a “strongly developed” stage or “embedded stage”.

Things the Parent Opinion Surveys conveyed that are done well at Hallett Cove Karrara Kindergarten include:

Teaching and learning:

• My child interacted very well with the teacher and talked about them at home;
• I have found the staff to be positive, helpful and patient with students and their parents.
• My child was always excited about going to kindy and we never had an issue getting her to go each day.
• Teachers were always smiling and happy and seem to enjoy being there
• Lots of wonderful learning activities
• A fun approach to learning
• Very encouraging
• Absolutely love the cooking lessons. It made the children feel very proud of what they accomplished.
• Very vibrant and interesting learning environment.
• Student support:
• I was able to approach the teachers with concerns about my child’s development
• My child has a speech issue which was picked up by the kindy almost straight away.
• I have been pleased that things have been brought to my attention to help my son progress.
• My child has had outstanding support and so have we as we have come to understand his learning needs. This has been a difficult journey for us and we could not have done it without them.
• Relationships and communication:
• Pride is very important and the kindy have provided many opportunities for this with a sense of place, children’s art and group events.
• I have found the learning about friendships has been a positive and very useful experience for my child
• Parents input is listened to and used and parents are very included in all as aspects of what they want their children to learn.
• Leadership and staff:
• I feel welcomed and appreciated for the tasks I volunteered to undertake
• I find the kindy to be open-minded and well educated.
• I have been very impressed with Karrara kindy during my involvement with this kindy over the past 7 years. It has enabled me to see the wonderful improvements that have been made and the wonderful experiences these children have been able to be involved in.
• The teachers have been wonderful and very encouraging.
• This kindy seems completely under control.
• Our director is very hands on and appears to have an overall plan for the kindy. I don’t feel as if she is just going day-to-day
• The director has excellent leadership skills and will always approach us, ask our advice and advise us about any decisions regarding our children.

Things the parent surveys conveyed that could be improved:

• Upgrading of the cubby house including new resources
• More outdoor climbing and equipment for challenging outdoor play
• Painting inside
Financial Statement

Available at the kindergarten