

Quality Improvement Plan 2021

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Service Approval Number
SE-000107269



About Us

We are a standalone Lutheran, Department of Education affiliated kindergarten located in the regional city of Murray Bridge. The kindergarten is located in a quiet residential area next to Holy Cross Lutheran Church. It is surrounded by houses, with many of our families living within easy walking and driving distance of the kindergarten. Many of our children access local childcare centres and are bused to and from the centre.

Concordia Kindergarten has a strong connection with Unity College to form the opportunity for families to access a continued Lutheran Education for their children, with Unity being one of our main feeder schools. In 2020 children were enrolled to attend 6 different schools at the beginning of the 2021 school year.

The centre currently has a capacity of 64 children per session per day. Currently children attend two full days Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday and alternate Wednesdays (9am-3pm), for the equivalent of 15 hours per week. Our kindergarten is able to provide some flexibility for parents by accessing a half hour of extended care before and after sessional kindergarten. The kindergarten employs an Early Childhood Worker to co-ordinate playgroup with the assistance of two volunteers and operates on Wednesday mornings 9:15am to 11:30am during the school term, with the exception of the last week of each term. Concordia Kindergarten is a multiculturally diverse community representing a number of different cultures each year in its enrolments, including Indigenous, The Americas, Asian, European and Middle Eastern.

The kindergarten was organised as a branch of the Lutheran Parish and was officially opened in 1975, with Holy Cross Council and the kindergarten Parent Auxiliary came to an agreement in the terms of a 5 year lease for the use of the Concordia Hall. In 1976 the kindergarten became affiliated with the Kindergarten Union, (now Department of Education) 1976 also saw the purchase of 29 Florence Street and the conversion of the house to the Holy Cross Centre, later demolished and the Concordia Kindergarten built.

Staff



Director

Toni Turci

Nominated
Supervisor

Diploma of Early
Childhood
Education

Graduate Diploma
of Theology for
Education



Teacher

Faye Stephens

Certified Supervisor

Diploma of

Early Childhood

Education

and Care

Bachelor of Education



Teacher

Jessica Jaensch

Certified Supervisor

Bachelor of Early
Childhood Education



Jessica Schellen



Mandy Raymond



Tanya White

Early Childhood Educators

Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care

A number of other staff also work at the kindergarten supporting the educational program and the operation of the kindergarten, these may include bilingual workers, preschool support workers, relief staff, administration officer and finance officer.

Our Philosophy

Concordia Kindergarten Statement of Philosophy

Mission Statement

To provide children with a learning environment that both challenges and supports their individual developmental needs. While ensuring the children feel secure and respected in an exceptionally caring and nurturing environment where the Christian ethos and the Grace of God is reflected in all we do.

Philosophy Statement

We believe God has made each child to be precious and unique and provide the opportunity for them to learn about Jesus Christ and begin to understand the value of God's love for them.

We believe God has created us to live in relationship with him and each other. At Concordia Kindergarten we acknowledge the many stakeholders in education, children, families, staff and the community. We acknowledge the importance of collaborative relationships in developing children's sense of belonging, self-identity and confidence.

We acknowledge and respect the diversity of each child and their family and our teachings will reflect the rich cultures that they bring to our centre, taking into consideration and celebrating our indigenous people, their customs and teachings.

We will provide children with opportunities to foster a positive sense of self by listening and valuing each child's voice; responding to each child in a positive and respectful manner; allowing each child to make choices about their learning and by supporting them to explore their ideas and challenge their own thinking to become the best version of themselves.

We strongly support a play-based learning environment. We believe when children are actively engaged in their own learning, they will develop a positive sense of self and wellbeing. Through the provision of a dynamic, challenging and open-ended curriculum, built upon the interests and prior experiences of each child, we will provide children with opportunities for exploration, discovery and consolidation of meaningful and deep learning.

We provide an environment inspired to encourage children to independently challenge their understandings of their world through, developing theories, test hypotheses, and using creative problem skills.

As educators at Concordia Kindergarten, we will uphold the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics that focuses on the protection and wellbeing of children. We will promote contemporary perspectives of Early Childhood Education and advocate and practice play as a primary learning tool. We have high expectations of ourselves as **reflective** practitioners and recognise our responsibilities in continuous improvement. All children have the right to access a high quality, play-based curriculum. We acknowledge that all children come to our kindergarten with a range of experiences, knowledge and diverse backgrounds and we celebrate this diversity. We understand that all children require different levels of scaffolding at different points along their educational journey. Staff will provide learning experiences that are open-ended and allow children to experience success while being challenged.

We acknowledge and value the natural elements of our kindergarten and aim to foster a sense of respect and connectedness with the world around us. We believe **sustainability** is an essential part of our curriculum and that each member of our community has a responsibility to actively practice and promote sustainability. Through embedded everyday practice and routines we support children's knowledge and understandings of their individual and shared impact and responsibility towards global sustainability and their responsibility to care for God's creation. We believe giving children opportunities to participate in tasks independently and interdependently develops their personal sense of self-worth and purpose as competent members of society.

Communication

The Statement of Philosophy is

- displayed at the Kindergarten entrance.
- included in Information booklet for enrolling families.
- included in Staff/Volunteer induction materials.
- On front page of Kindergarten App city app.

A copy of the Quality Improvement Plan is

- available for the parents to access at their leisure.
- available to staff in the staff room, A3 pages for ongoing reviewing
- Kept in the Governing Council folder stored in the office.
- Available online via the kindergarten website

Our Strengths

2021 has seen some changes in the staff team at Concordia Kindergarten, with a change of leadership and two returning teachers, there has been the bringing together of different perspectives in the delivery of the educational program. Together the staff team reflected upon their values, beliefs, current research and understandings of early childhood education, and the kindergarten community to review and redevelop the kindergarten's philosophy statement. With the support of the Governing Council staff reviewed and developed the seven philosophy statements that underpin and guide our daily practice. The seven philosophy statements reflect who we are as a kindergarten community and are central to our work. They inform our daily interactions and how we deliver the educational program.

As a staff team we will continue to follow the same strategic timeline as in previous years as for self-review focusing on the Reflective Questions from the Guide to the National Quality Standards. Using the reflective questions supported staff to think deeply and to engage in critically reflective dialogue as part of a dynamic and enthusiastic team. As part of our self-review cycle against the National Quality Standards staff will continue to critically reflect upon each quality area over the course of the year. In term one 'Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety' and 'Quality Area 3: Physical Environment' will be reviewed; 'Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements' and 'Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management'. In Term 2; 'Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children and Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Community' in Term 3; and 'Quality Area 1: Educational Programs and Practices in Term 4'. From the self-review process of 2020, a comprehensive action plan has been developed, this will be reviewed and adjusted to match the arising needs of 2021.

It is through a culture of rigorous open dialogue staff continue to engage in conversations that relate their work to the National Quality Standards and having received a rating of Exceeding in 3,4,5,6, and 7 quality areas in 2012, we are now not only maintaining this standard but are working towards gaining lifting our rating of quality areas 1 and 2.

Our strengths have been identified through a continuous cycle of self-reflection and self-review and should be read in combination with our Annual Report. At the end of each year staff spend time reflecting upon the year's work, our achievements, challenges, and future directions. The Annual Report summarises our achievements and future directions, it forms the basis for the next step in our planning cycle, the review and redevelopment of our Quality Improvement Plan.

Quality Area 1 Educational Program and Practice

At Concordia Kindergarten we are committed to the delivery of a high quality kindergarten program where children can grow, learn and be free to simply, be. Our play-based educational program is broad, varied and built upon children's strengths, ideas, and interests, as well as being extended by staff's professional knowledge and interests; community events; and current research and theories. Our work is underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework, *Belong, Being and Becoming*, where the practices and principles are lived out through our daily program and interactions with the children.

As a Lutheran Kindergarten we engage the children in the Lutheran Christian Studies Curriculum Framework both through planned and unplanned learning opportunities. Our focus on Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control (fruits of the spirit) fit well with the intentions of the Early Years Learning Framework of holistic development and growth.

Staff are constantly engaged in critical reflection centring on the kindergarten's current curriculum planning, assessment and documentation processes, and the responsibilities of all staff in contributing to the cycle of observing, assessing, documenting, reporting and planning. The Early Years Learning Framework provided a support with staff reflection upon the principles and practices and their own pedagogies, helping to consolidate our understandings and work within a strengths-based curriculum. Some staff have been involved in rigorous professional readings and conversations around developing children's sense of agency, the change of staff has meant that this line of inquiry will continue across 2021 and into 2022 to ensure that our approach to teaching and learning is constant.

With all children starting at the beginning of the kindergarten (school) year there has been the need to consider the developmental needs of our children. Our daily routine was established with the aim of transitioning children into the kindergarten day safely and providing them with opportunities for teacher lead group experiences and time for uninterrupted play. The daily routine and educational program provide children with opportunities to make independent decisions about their learning; recognising the signs and signals their bodies are giving them in relation to eating and personal needs; extended periods of uninterrupted play; group experiences and shared meal times; time for quieter and active participation; this also ensures a high level of safety at the beginning and end of the day. The daily routine is flexible in allowing staff and children to alter routines based on engagement levels, with staff communicating with the children and each other around routines on a regular basis throughout the day. The daily routine provides opportunities for children to follow their interests and provides flexibility in

generating and following new ideas. The daily routine is reflected upon at the end of the year as children head off to school and again in the first few weeks of the year as new children enter the kindergarten with individual needs.

Communication with families about the program and children's learning is an essential element of the family-kindergarten partnership. At the first point of contact with the kindergarten families are provided with a small brochure about our kindergarten and the education program. When the child is enrolled families also receive information about the educational programs through our enrolment pack and a parent information session. These pieces of information are the beginning of developing an ongoing relationship with the families who access the kindergarten. We offer a number of transition sessions prior to starting full time kindergarten which allows staff to begin to get to know children and their families, and for them to get to know us.

Parents are also encouraged, wherever possible to bring their child to play group to support their child's transition into the kindergarten setting. They also provide an opportunity to engage in dialogue about children's interests and to answer any questions families may have.

In the first weeks of starting full time kindergarten families are offered the opportunity to participate in a short informal conversation about their child, their strengths and interests, as well as raising any concerns and sharing their hopes for the kindergarten year. Families who were unable to attend a conversation meeting in the first weeks are encouraged to make an appointment at another time. The information provided by families about their child during this conversation, or during other conversations is documented and goes towards developing an individual learning plan for each child at the end of term one. Throughout the kindergarten year families are encouraged to make contact with staff to discuss their child's development and learning. This tracking gives staff data to critically reflect on, identifying areas not noticed or provided for in the curriculum, and ensuring each child's learning and development is monitored and planned for, which is also transferred to the child's intended school to provide information to assist in the transition to school.

From staff interactions with, and observations of children, along with knowledge shared by the family, learning experiences are planned to extend children's strengths, ideas and interests. Staff bring documented observations and anecdotal observations of children to fortnightly curriculum meetings where they reflect and plan for the next stage of learning. The flexibility of the routine and of staff, often allows for extension of children's ideas and interests as they occur throughout the day.

Staff undertake a multi-layered approach to informing the kindergarten community about the program, using newsletters, posters and displays around the kindergarten with notes alongside, the daily sign in book, email, floor books, posters, as well as each family has access to a confidential App (See-Saw) with photos and documentation.

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

We have a strong focus on healthy lifestyles at our kindergarten, particularly on healthy eating. Over a number of years several staff have successfully implemented healthy eating programmes including Eat a Rainbow (EaR), at this site and at previous sites. Staff notice after implementing the program, which focuses on increasing children's daily fruit and vegetable intake, the quality and quantity of healthy foods provided at kindergarten increases. While the EaR program runs over a short period of time, staff continue to engage children and families in conversation around healthy lifestyle choices throughout the year, and healthy lifestyle choices are imbedded into the kindergarten program. In 2021 the EaR programme will be implemented once again. Upon enrolment at the kindergarten families receive information about the EaR and the daily healthy eating guidelines, as well as suggestions for what to pack for the kindergarten day. This information continues to be provided throughout the year via our regular communication channels.

As part of our educational program children are actively encouraged and supported to take increasing responsibility for their own health and safety. Health and hygiene are discussed on a daily basis and children are supported in basic hygiene practices such as nose blowing, hand washing, toileting and cleaning through explicit teaching and incidental interactions. Information about health and hygiene is included in the kindergarten's information booklet to families, and families are actively encouraged to support children in becoming independent in managing their own personal hygiene. The kindergarten is cleaned each night by a cleaner and cleaning procedures are in place for the cleaning of incidental spills and toys and equipment.

In the event of an outbreak of an infectious illness, families are notified via a note above the daily sign in book and on the white board, along with information about the specific illness. In cases of more serious illnesses, such as whooping cough, families will also receive individual notification in the form of a letter delivered via our normal communication methods.

Upon enrolment information is gathered about children's health and dietary requirements. When necessary further information may be sought prior to attendance at kindergarten and individual action plans may be developed for each child. The kindergarten staff team work closely with families and other health professionals to ensure each child's health needs are planned for and met while they are at kindergarten. All staff hold current certificates in "Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting" which satisfies all requirements for first aid, anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma training under the National Regulations. When necessary, staff undertake additional training in supporting individual children's health care needs. Medication procedures are in place to ensure all medication is documented, stored correctly and administered correctly. Where possible parents are requested that their doctor provide medication that is administered outside regular kindergarten hours, if this is not possible written notification from the doctor is required

and medicines must be presented to staff in original packaging. We have in place a double check system to ensure the correct medication is given in the appropriate dosage to the intended child. Our kindergarten uses an Allergy Buddy system that allows for all relevant information to be stored with each child's medication, is visible to all staff, and easily accessible to staff in an emergency. Medication that requires refrigeration is kept in a locked box in the fridge next to the first aid cupboard.

The kindergarten has a documented Emergency Management Plan which is reviewed annually. Emergency procedures are located at each entry/exit point and are discussed and practiced with children at least twice per term. After each practice staff reflect on the procedure and if changes are required then they are documented and applied.

As a Lutheran, Department of Education (DoE) affiliated Kindergarten we are guided a number of DoE policies and procedures that underpin and guide our daily practice. The kindergarten has also developed several site-specific policies and procedures that also guide our work. These policies are reviewed and updated bi-annually and recorded in a policy register in accordance with a review schedule, with all policy update requirements entered on the Lutheran Complispace system to ensure this review is undertaken. The Complispace system is an effective tool for ensuring relevant health and safety requirements are achieved with a number of tasks completed each term. Staff employ a number of strategies to ensure children's health and safety is maintained, including conducting static and dynamic risk assessments for all excursions, high risk activities, supervision and as issues and concerns arise. Staff conduct termly playground inspections, as well as a daily visual inspection recorded on a daily inspection sheet. Staff consult the National and State Law and Regulations; DoE and Lutheran Education Policies and Site Policies; National Quality Standards and Australian Playground Standards when conducting risk assessments and considering issues and concerns which are recorded on Hazard Record Sheet and expected response /completion dates are also recorded.

All staff have completed mandatory Relevant History Screenings, Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training. The Director and two teachers have completed the Child Protection Curriculum Update and SMART training. The Keeping Safe Child Protection curriculum is implemented incidentally throughout our daily work and through planned teaching experiences. Health and safety concerns are raised and discussed as they occur or during staff meetings. Staff consult the National and State Law and Regulations; DoE Policies and Site Policies; National Quality Standards and Australian Playground Standards when conducting risk assessments and considering issues and concerns.

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Staff value the learning environment as a critical element in our kindergarten program, drawing upon knowledge from Reggio Emilia and the philosophy of the environment as the third teacher, they carefully plan both the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Staff carefully consider each element in the environment as they aim to foster a sense of belonging, with reference to children's experiences and culture. When planning learning spaces staff strive to provide inviting, stimulating and thought-provoking elements with a balance that evokes active play as well as creativity, quiet contemplation, social experiences and moments of solitude.

Our kindergarten has in previous years begun to transform its outdoor learning environment into a more natural space, 2021 will see the recommencement of this, with community survey, data collection on children's use of the current space, negotiations with Church Council and support from the Kindergarten Governing Council. All work will be done within council development and Play Safe regulations and in consultation with play scape professionals.

The staff have observed how children use the existing natural spaces and now as they make their pedagogical shift and loose parts are added to the environment the essence of nature play is beginning to emerge. The kindergarten has a culture of rigorous self-reflection and open dialogue through this we have identified and acted upon our own nature pedagogy. Hence, throughout 2021 staff are engaging in a variety of professional development to enable their practice to embrace the latest theories of the benefits of children engaging in and with nature and to maximize learning opportunities whilst immersed in nature. This is an exciting time for our kindergarten as we undertake the process of growing our outdoor learning environment and our engagement with it.

The team at Concordia kindergarten are a highly skilled and dedicated group who have challenged themselves to ensure the children are provided with creative and stimulating learning environments both inside and in the outdoors. Staff have identified that while the art studio has provided a wide range of art experiences we believe that 'art' should be extended into include all areas of the curriculum and experienced in all areas of the learning environment. As a staff team we are constantly reflecting on our practice and to ensure the essence of the Reggio Emilia philosophies are not lost we have engaged in professional learning and by embracing practice guiding children to explore, creatively problem solve, discover and create and reflect on their own learning.

At the beginning of 2021 staff reflected upon the kindergarten's sustainability practices and implemented a number of strategies to increase the sustainability of the kindergarten. These strategies have been embedded into practice and 2021 sees the reintroduction of composting along with a the purchase of a worm farm, which was supported by an educational program with the children, we now have reduced our waste and recycle bins to consist of much smaller receptacles. During 2021 we will engage the services of the Murray Bridge Council's education

officer to come and work with the children to support their learning around environmental sustainability and ways they can reduce their environmental footprint. In the past we have and will continue to use NRM resources and expertise as we develop our practises and provide learning opportunities around sustainability.

Many of our planned kindergarten excursions are to places that nurture the understanding that we play a critical role in providing a secure future for our planet. We continue to participate in programs that support sustainable practices by engaging children in a range of experiences including recycling, composting, growing our own vegetables, harvesting storm water and conservative water use.

Quality Area 4: Staff

Our core staff team consists of a full-time director, 1.5 full time teachers and 1 full time and 2 0.5 early childhood workers. This team is also supported by a 0.4 Universal Access teacher and 0.4 UA early childhood worker, there are also 4 preschool support workers who are employed through the department of Education 's preschool support. Together they deliver the kindergarten curriculum and the preschool support programme as well as providing care over the rostered staff lunch breaks and at other pinnacle times of the day. To maintain stability for the children we access a small pool of relief staff whenever possible.

There is an extensive staff induction process to ensure all staff have the information required to have a productive and successful day. Attending staff meetings is a high priority of the team, with general business and curriculum meetings being held on alternate weeks. Agreed protocols have been established to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to contribute to discussions and feel respected and valued members of the team. As a team we have a wide range of experiences, interests, and skills however as a collective we have shared values, beliefs and philosophies. We have a highly valued positive work culture in which we all have high expectations of ourselves and of our colleagues. As a highly committed team we engage openly in critically reflective and open conversations, solving issues honestly and together. Our decision-making processes reflect the kindergarten philosophy, while the Code of Ethics guides our interactions and behaviours. It is this cohesive and communicative team attributes that enables us to deliver an engaging, educational kindergarten programme where each individual child's developmental needs can be met through play.

The Concordia Kindergarten staff are critical thinkers and engage in a culture of inquiry and continual improvement. Through a wide variety of professional learning, we are constantly challenging our thinking as we broadening our knowledge base, engage in critical dialogue and accessing literature that supports the lasted theories of thinking, brain development and how children best learn as well as extending on

previous professional learning on teaching and learning in the natural play environment. Through data collected both formally and through casual conversations there is a continued high level of community satisfaction regarding the quality of the staff, their professional knowledge and enthusiasm for the children's learning.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

Developing and maintaining positive relationships with children is a fundamental element of the kindergarten programme and underpins everything we do. Developing strong relationships with the children and their families is a priority of our work in term one. It starts at enrolment in the year prior to attendance and continues through the transition visits, the information evening and parent interviews. It is these open and honest interactions that support the development of warm and respectful relationships with open communications between staff and families. These relationships also promote the child's sense of belonging in the kindergarten community and ultimately are supportive of each individual's positive experiences at kindergarten. Staff in conjunction with families then support the child on their learning journey. The staff have reflected on daily structures and believe the daily routine is conducive to the building of positive and respectful relationships. The kindergarten environment and structure provide opportunities for children and adults to develop relationships with adults and peers through inclusion in small groups, large groups and whole group activities but also the freedom and the time to explore relationships with a wide range of individual children. Staff carefully monitor children's play patterns and their interactions with others as they engage in socio-dramatic play at their developmental level and by providing guidance and scaffolding as required are able to support individuals learning.

Relationships are a crucial element of our kindergarten program, the development of relationships with children and families is always central to what we do and much of our first term at kindergarten is devoted to establishing warm, trusting, respectful and responsive relationships with children, and for children to develop a sense of belonging in the kindergarten environment. Our daily routine and kindergarten environment is designed to promote opportunities for staff and child interactions; small group interactions with a staff member; larger group interaction with a staff member; whole group interactions, and small and larger group interactions amongst children. Many opportunities are provided for children to engage in socio-dramatic play in a range of situations. Staff closely observe children's play and interactions with other children, providing support and guidance when required.

Prior to beginning kindergarten, we encourage our families to attend our playgroup where children can become familiar with the kindergarten environment and can begin to develop relationships with staff. We offer transition sessions in the term prior to starting kindergarten where children and their families can come and explore the kindergarten. We acknowledge that starting kindergarten can be a big transition for many children. They are not only learning about the rules and routines and getting to know staff, they are also getting to know many other children. In the first few weeks of kindergarten, we encourage families to support children's resilience and acknowledge the huge effort required when settling into kindergarten. Where children have difficulty in transitioning we work together to develop plans and strategies to support each child's through the transition process.

2021 will see the staff team continue to reflect on their practice, building on observations made by peers using the Respect, Reflect, Relate scales. Developing children's sense of agency will continue to be on our professional learning agenda as we explore new theories about children's learning and brain development, particularly in relation to developing nature play in our emerging natural play environment.

Relationships with children are strengthened by engaging in genuine conversations and interactions and our responses to their requests, needs and interests convey messages of mutual respect. When children feel safe, secure and supported they feel confident and capable. Staff have become competent users of the positive language around mindsets and are continuing their professional learning by engaging in literature of *The 100 languages of the Child*, and encouraging the children to engage with the natural environment to deepen their understanding of the world.

The kindergarten is well resourced with a variety of support equipment enabling all children regardless of skills and ability to engage fully with the curriculum inclusive of their individual needs, including those with special rights and those for non-English speaking backgrounds. The use of a standardised visual representation cues, (book maker), along with verbal and key word signing has been highly effective in providing a voice for children with little or no English and children with additional needs. The ability to communicate with staff fosters a sense of connectedness and belonging. The extensive use of an App City, App to communicate with parents and the regular use of email is enabling parents of non-English speaking cultures to engage more fully with the kindergarten and its curriculum.

Quality Area 6: Relationships with Families and Community

The relationships we develop with families are as essential as the relationships we develop with the children; we have found that when issues arise the root cause is often ineffectively formed relationships. Working in partnership with families ensures children's learning and development is maximised.

Providing families with information about the kindergarten at the right time has been a priority for the kindergarten over the last 12 months. Point of contact information brochures have been developed to provide families with information about the kindergarten program and the playgroup program. This information is provided to families via email or when they visit the kindergarten. Staff take the time to share about the kindergarten and the enrolment process. Families wishing to enrol their child at our kindergarten are asked to complete a

pre-enrolment form. Once enrolment has been confirmed families are invited to attend a parent information session where further information about the kindergarten is shared and families have an opportunity to ask questions. Families are also presented with a comprehensive information pack which provides information about the kindergarten; the educational program and summaries of kindergarten policies and procedures; healthy eating; The Early Years Learning Framework; National Quality Framework; illness and infectious diseases; protective practices and executive functioning.

Enrolment and induction is an essential component in the information sharing and relationship building process, when making initial inquiries families are encouraged to bring their child/children to playgroup. This provides an excellent forum for the child to become familiar with the centre and the staff and allows parents to network and support one another. Over the course of the year families receive regular communication about the kindergarten, its programs and services and their child's learning and development. Our kindergarten is built upon community and family participation and families are actively encouraged and supported to be involved at a level that suits them. Many opportunities are provided throughout the year to encourage family engagement in the kindergarten program, from family acquaintance nights, to excursions and VIP evenings, as well as volunteering during the kindergarten session or simply doing odd jobs. The kindergarten plans many experiences as part of the children's entitled kindergarten hours that promote a sense of community and family participation. There are several traditional events throughout the year including a Mothers Night, Fathers Night, The Night of Stars and graduation. These events encourage full community participation and focus on developing family and community connections, and will continue in 2021 in a format that is within COVID guidelines.

The kindergarten employs a number of strategies to involve families in the decision-making processes of the kindergarten and family feedback is sought throughout the year on a range of topics. This includes information about how and what information they want to receive about their child's time at kindergarten, feedback about kindergarten policies and procedures, and feedback about events and programs offered. The Governing Council provides families with the opportunity to participate in decision making that effects the future of the kindergarten and the educational programs.

Our current session structure of 5 full days per fortnight for each child, provides us with many wonderful opportunities to explore our local and extended community. 2021 will see the kindergarten community embrace nature play with many visits to Unity college explore their nature play space, walks to Memorial Park which is a council nature play space and excursions that embrace nature play (ie Kuitpo Forest and the beach). Our belief that children learn best through hands on exploration and play is reflected in the structure of the day, by minimizing structured times we allow the children the time to fully engage with the curriculum learning and developing skills over time

and at a pace that is individually tailored to suit their needs. Through critical reflection the staff are hoping to have the Governing Council approve a timetable change in 2022 to have the children attend 2 consecutive 7.5hr days, Monday /Tuesday and Thursday/Fridays with Wednesday used for staff meetings, curriculum design and programming and reporting and documentation. Alternate Wednesday's staff will not be on site ensuring their award entitlements are met.

Having the centre free from kindergarten program will give the opportunity for our playgroup to continue to grow deepening relationships between the kindergarten and families. It will provide the opportunity for staff to observe the children prior to attending kindergarten and enable support to be in place as necessary from the commencement of the kindergarten year.

The kindergarten has developed many positive relationships with outside service providers including dentists, podiatrists, CFS/MFS, SAPOL, and Child Youth Health services. Parents are actively encouraged to support their child's health and well-being by participating in these programmes through the kindergarten.

We are very mindful of the extra expense that families incur with excursions and therefore make the most of the facilities available in our local area. Walking to events and parks wherever possible. We also engage in many spontaneous excursions during regular session times walking to the local shops, neighbourhood explorations helping to build the children's resilience. We have developed relationships with our local Bunnings store which will involve reciprocal visits throughout the year, (COVID restrictions permitting). We are fortunate to have Unity College as part of Lutheran Education in the Murraylands by having natural and positive relationship with them we are able to access their school bus to transport us to and from a variety of programmes at the school including cross age-buddy sessions, use of their Nature Play space and attending special events at the school. We also access the school bus for transporting the children for intergenerational activities at the local Lutheran aged care facility.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan development has begun to be formalised in consultation with staff, Ngarrindjeri families and Elders. This document makes a commitment for the kindergarten staff to continue to integrate the local culture into everyday practice. We regularly access Ngarrindjeri family members for music, storytelling, language, and art as well as traditional ceremonies and celebrations. Our formal Acknowledgement to Country was written through conversations and consultation with our local community members and elders. It is read at special occasions and before the commencement of Governing Council meetings. Ray Love has also written a Welcome to Country in Ngarrindjeri for our community, for display in the entrance.

The children's Acknowledgement of Country is a short rhyming verse with actions and is embedded in practice being by recited with the children on a regular basis.

Quality Area 7 :Leadership

Concordia Kindergarten believes in a shared leadership approach where each stake holder has opportunities to genuinely participate in decision making processes. As an affiliated Lutheran kindergarten our work is governed by a number of policies and associated documents that ensure specific acts and regulations, and the core business and objectives of the department and the Lutheran Education of Australia are adhered to. The director is responsible for ensuring each participant follows relevant acts, regulations, policies and procedures, however, works together with the staff, families and community to ensure they are implemented in a way that is respectful to the kindergarten community.

The Governing Council works with the kindergarten director to set and monitor the direction of the kindergarten. With the director the Governing Council involves the local community; develops and approves local policies; sets the broad direction and vision of the kindergarten; monitors and reviews the kindergarten's quality improvement plan and budget. In 2021 the Governing Council along with the staff and the data collected from families, will be investigating the re-commencement of the upgrading of the outdoor learning environment.

Staff meetings are held weekly and focus on administrative and management tasks including, work, health and safety, national quality framework, professional development, and quality 8 improvement planning Curriculum meetings on the alternate week provide a structured time to reflect upon the educational program, individual and group learning and to plan for future learning. This also give staff a forum to discuss their own professional learning in relation to the curriculum and improved outcomes for the children.

The kindergarten Parent Complaint and Concern Resolution Policy in line with the Department of Education policy. Information about raising a concern or complaint is provided in the kindergarten's information booklet and provided to families again during the year. Processes for the management of complaints and concerns have also been developed. It is the aim that complaints will be dealt with at the site level, with issues tabled, conversations documented and confidentiality of utmost importance.

Comprehensive induction processes have been developed for staff, volunteers, students and Governing Council. A site-specific information brochure has been developed to provide temporary relief teachers and early childhood works, quick information about

the site. This information is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Where possible we employ regular relief staff at the kindergarten, their knowledge of the centre and the children help maintain a stable learning environment for the children. Staff participate in formal performance development throughout the year, with a formal meeting held at the beginning and end of the kindergarten year.

Information about the staff team is provided to the kindergarten community in the parent information booklet, the Annual Report and the Quality Improvement Plan is on display and accessible to the families at all times. 2021 will see the upgrading of our website, and Facebook page as a staff team and in consultation with the governing council it was decided that our social media presence is essentially our 'front door' and is where first impressions of the site are formed and therefore its redevelopment