We believe children learn through play by exploring, experimenting, developing skills and abilities, working together, making links and building understandings in a safe caring environment where everyone is important and learning is valued.
The community of Salisbury Heights Preschool values an integrated play and activity based learning environment for children. We believe children learn through play by exploring, experimenting, developing skills and abilities, working together, making links and building understandings in a safe caring environment where everyone is important and learning is valued. Our priorities are wellbeing and engagement, literacy and numeracy development and environmental awareness. Salisbury Heights Preschool is located in a residential area of Salisbury Heights with 72% of children attending from the surrounding suburbs. Our enrolments have grown this year. In term 4 97 eligible children were enrolled. The building is modern and spacious and, together with the attractive grounds, provides an interesting learning environment for the children. The majority of children are from 2 parent homes with English being their main language.

During 2010, Salisbury Heights Preschool’s improvement priorities have focused on:
- Numeracy - How can we further develop numeracy experiences/learning for the children?
- Curriculum development: introducing the new Early Years Learning Framework - Belonging, Being and Becoming
- Service delivery: exploring service delivery models in preparation for Universal Access - 15 hours of preschool

**Numeracy - How can we further develop numeracy experiences / learning for the children?**

We have continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for children to engage in numeracy experiences. Mathematical concepts, activities and experiences have been presented during small group time across the 5 mathematical strands - pattern sense and algebraic reasoning, number, spatial sense and geometric reasoning, measurement and data. These learning opportunities have been linked to numeracy experiences across the whole curriculum. Children have been able to apply their numeracy skills in a variety of activities.

Staff continued to participate in relevant professional learning opportunities. Information related to various areas of numeracy has been presented in newsletters. Further numeracy story kits and take home numeracy activities for children and parents to work on together have been developed. For example, when exploring number families were invited to make a number picture about their house, for spatial sense to go on a shape walk and measurement to measure various things at home.

- All children have been involved in exploring concepts related to pattern sense. In their second term 68% of children could arrange 4 shapes in order of size, while in their fourth term 96% of children could arrange 4 shapes in order of size.
- In relation to spatial sense in their second term 66% of children could identify 4 or more shapes, while in their fourth term 86% of children could identify 4 or more shapes.
- In the area of number 98% of children in their last term of preschool were able to count with 1:1 correspondence over 10 and 84% were able to identify 5 or more numerals.
- All children were involved in using a range of measuring tools to...
measure various attributes. This included measuring their height, weight, width of hand, head circumference as well as measuring how many jumps/claps/etc they could do in 30 seconds as part of our 'measuring me' project.

(Data collected from 51 children commencing school in fourth term, 2010 and first term, 2011)

Positive feedback from parents relating to their child’s numeracy learning at preschool has been received via some additional questions on the Parent Survey.

Has your child talked about these activities? Yes 95%

“All the time. She often practices some of these activities at home”

“Sometimes my child gets so excited after experiencing some of the activities that he can talk about them for days”

Do you think these experiences have been valuable for your child? Yes 84%

“Yes - my child sees how these activities can be used inside and outside the home”

“Definitely a good introduction to concepts needed for school and real life”

Have you found the information in the newsletters useful? (eg term overview, number walk activity, shape information, measuring me project) Yes 100%

“The newsletter was a very valuable resource for us as parents”

“The newsletters are informative and comprehensive of the activities (past and future)”

Are there particular experiences they have enjoyed?

“Numbers. Measurement +++ She measured everything and everyone at home”

“My child enjoyed the spatial experience esp tessellation ......”

Curriculum development - Belonging, Being and Becoming

During terms 1 and 2 staff spent time exploring the new curriculum document, reviewing current practice and implementing appropriate changes. Information was shared with parents through newsletters and discussions at Governing Council meetings. Parent information booklets and brochures were altered and curriculum resources and reporting formats were revised. Since the beginning of term 3 Belonging, Being and Becoming has been used as our curriculum document for all planning, recording, evaluating and reporting.

Service delivery - exploring service delivery models in preparation for offering 15 hours of preschool

Consultation and planning occurred in term 3 related to implementing the 15 hours of preschool in possibly 2011. Discussions were held with Parents of kindergarten, pre-entry and playgroup children to gauge their opinions and suggestions for session arrangements. Staff also spent time working out the logistics of this change. Our priority in planning for these changes was to ensure that the children continued to participate in a quality educational program which met their needs as young children. Consideration was also given to accommodating family needs and meeting industrial obligations to staff in relation to workload and conditions.

The model developed offered the majority of children 2 full days each week with an additional fortnightly 4 hour session. An option for 4 sessions of 3¾ hours would also be available. Playgroup would continue on Friday afternoons. However it became apparent later in the year that the introduction of 15 hours would be delayed. This model may also need to be revised in consideration of a single starting date for preschool children each year from 2013.

Continuing Priority - Literacy development

We have continued to support the children's development of oral literacy through:

- Promoting home-preschool shared literacy experiences (borrowing child sized dolls, borrowing books and story kits).
- Home-preschool shared learning activities - Mystery box. This activity provided the children with the opportunity to practice asking and answering questions and also listening.
- Planning learning opportunities for children to develop their skills and abilities in relation to speaking in sentences and engaging in conversations, listening, following auditory instructions, levels of questions, phonological awareness, etc. Data collected from children commencing school in fourth term, 2010 or first term, 2011 indicated 78% could recognise rhyming words and 64% were able to produce rhyming word patterns. 98% could identify the letters in their name from a random sheet of alphabet letters.

The graph on the right shows the percentage of correct responses to levels of questioning for children commencing school in fourth term, 2010 or first term, 2011.

- Focusing on the development of oral language skills through play, including involving the children in planning socio-dramatic play areas eg beach, vet, show, etc.
- Providing daily small group literacy experiences for all children.
- Recording and evaluating children's involvement in the learning environment, as well as the development of their skills and abilities. Parents have indicated that they value the children's portfolios as a way of recording a child's involvement in the learning environment.
- Identifying and monitoring children at risk and developing appropriate intervention strategies in consultation with parents and support services (if appropriate). The Speech link and more recently Language link online diagnostic tools have assisted in the process of identifying children with speech and language difficulties. For example 5 children who were identified with mild to moderate articulation difficulties using Speech link accessed the home programs provided and also received some additional support at preschool. By the end of the year 3 of these children required no further support with their speech sounds. (These children were ineligible for Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) speech pathology support as they did not have severe speech needs.)

- Involving children in their last term of preschool in planning the learning program for the following fortnight.
- Staff participation in relevant professional learning opportunities.

Validation Process

Staff continued to engage in self review processes using the DECS Improvement and Accountability Framework (DIAf). The culmination of this process was the participation by preschool staff and representatives from the Governing Council in a validation meeting with David O'Brien (Assistant Regional Director), Karen Schutz (Early Years Co-ordinator and Sue Tiver (Preschool Director). The report provided was very positive with many commendations and recognised the work of staff and Governing Council.

"There is substantial evidence that for the period, 2008 – 2010, the Director at Salisbury Heights Preschool has led processes that have ensured the DIAf Self Review standards have been well met. A strong evidence-base was evident for all improvement processes (numeracy & literacy) and each of these was linked to a process of review & redesign that was inquiry-focused. Rich examples were provided around the redesign of the sites numeracy practices and the development & implementation of a more contemporary approach to programming in this area. These processes were underpinned by democratic principles with a strong sense of ‘joint-work’ evident across the site. There was also significant emphasis placed on the identification and monitoring of students who are considered ‘at risk’ in their academic and social development.”
**Governing Council**

The 2010 Governing Council had 13 members; including 11 Parents of children attending, a Staff Representative and the Director. The council was elected at the Annual General Meeting in February and met 8 times during the year. The Council oversaw the operation of the Preschool with regular reports from the Director. Increasing enrolments and staffing was one issue considered, as was a review and update of the Sun Safe Policy. The introduction of 15 hours of preschool and the new curriculum framework (Belonging, Being and Becoming) were also discussed. Governing Council members were also involved in the Validation Process. The focus of fundraising events has been to raise funds for the purchase of an Interactive Whiteboard. A Family Evening on 2nd December was enjoyed by many children and parents and was a fitting culmination to the year.

**Preschool Parent Survey**

Feedback from Parents has indicated general satisfaction with the Preschool. The following comments were taken from the Survey:

“My child has thoroughly enjoyed her year at the preschool. The teachers have informed me and kept me up to date with my child’s progress throughout the year and I would highly recommend Salisbury Heights Preschool to anyone in the community for its quality of teaching and learning and wonderful caring attitudes of teachers at the preschool.”

“My child always feels comfortable and has complete trust (as do I) in her teachers. She often wants to stay behind after sessions to continue in activities with her peers and teachers, she enjoys preschool that much. She is always excited to go to Salisbury Heights Preschool each day.”

“Parents are both well informed and welcome to give their input. Decision making is certainly a joint union between preschool staff and parents.”

“All staff there were organised and were always coming up with new and exciting ways of learning. I would 100% recommend the kindy to others in the future.”

The survey was distributed to families with children leaving preschool at the end of terms 4, 2009 and terms 1, 2 and 3, 2010. 37 surveys were returned from 78 distributed (47% return rate). Responses were very positive and indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the preschool.

![2010 Parent Survey](chart.png)

**2010 Parent Survey**

A rating of 5 (strongly agree) represents the highest scale rating available on the survey.

**Quality of the teaching & learning 4.84**

**Support of learning 4.75**

**Relationships & communication 4.82**

**Leadership & decision making 4.71**

**Professional learning**

Staff continued to build their knowledge and participate in a range of professional learning opportunities. During term 1 we spent many hours examining the Belonging, Being and Becoming document and considering the implications for using this document to plan and evaluate the children’s learning experiences. Site improvement priorities guide decisions about professional learning. Consequently 65 hours related to literacy development, 13½ hours to numeracy, 28 hours to sustainability and the environment, 18 hours related to interactive whiteboards and 40 hours to other areas. Of these hours 129½ were completed in our own time outside work hours.
An ongoing emphasis has been placed on regular attendance and information highlighting the staffing on attendance policy has been regularly placed in newsletters. The majority of our children continue to attend for 4 morning or 4 afternoon sessions. 12 children have attended for a full day on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays, giving a total of 36 children accessing this arrangement. These children attend for 1 full day and 2 half days. The demand for a full day has generally kept pace with positions available. A number of children share their time between preschool and other sites, eg child care, Montessori, etc. New Friends Child Care Centre has continued a bus run to drop off and pick up children from preschool. This service has been valued by families as it provides increased options and has also enabled some children to attend preschool more regularly.

Families are encouraged to contact the preschool if a child is absent. Staff follow-up prolonged unexplained absences. Attendance details are provided on a child’s 2nd term individual learning plan and 4th term summative statement.