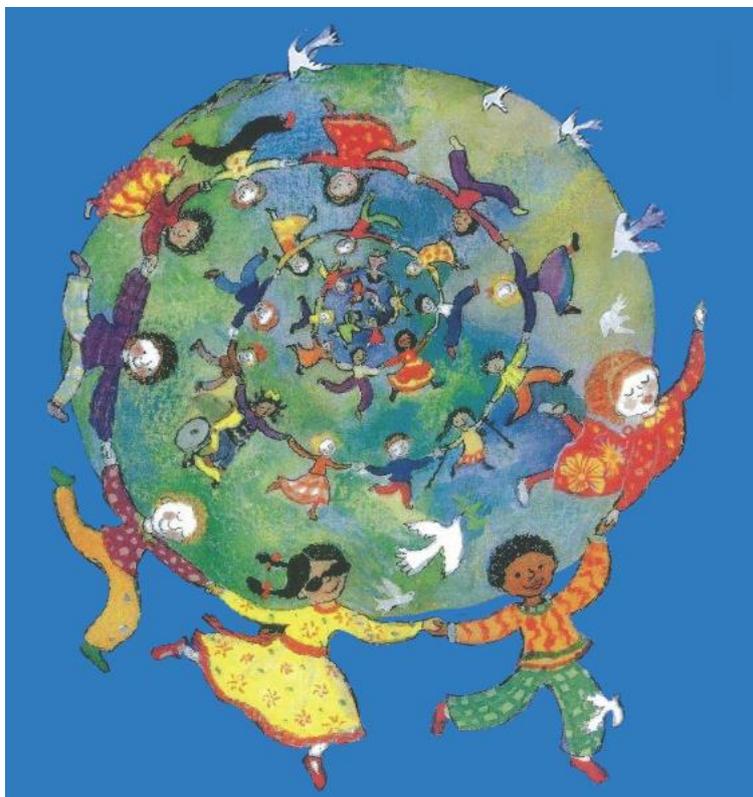


The Briars SELC

... a vibrant, safe and nurturing learning
community for children with disabilities

Annual Report 2015



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

1. CONTEXT

Preschool Name: The Briars Special Early Learning Centre

Preschool Number: 1417

Preschool Director: Judith Candy

Partnership: Campbell

The beginning of 2015 was an unusual start to the year for The Briars team. With six children not placed in a special option we set up a transition class until DECD was able to accommodate them. Although very successful in providing a sound educational program for the children the pressure did take its toll on The Briars staff. The transition program continued until the end of term 2 when all of the children were placed in a variety of sites.

Another issue impacting on The Briars was the decision that children under six years of age would no longer be transported by the DECD Transport Program. This put a lot of stress on staff as we told parents that their children would not be able to come to The Briars unless they could find someone to assist in bringing them to the site. We estimate that we lost at least ten enrolments.

The year, however, was a time of consolidation. Our plans for the outdoor area slowly started to pull together and we are truly seeing the fruits of our labour. Our trial or pilot programs have been evaluated and we have established the foundation to continue and grow our unique programs detailed in this report.

2. REPORT FROM GOVERNING COUNCIL

To be attached.

3. HIGHLIGHTS 2015

To the delight of the children and staff, we harvested our first crop of fruit! Great care had been taken when planning our orchard and we were rewarded with a tiny green apple, a tiny red apple and a tiny green pear. Next year we are hoping for more abundance and at the least hope to have a red pear and a variety of citrus too.

In 2015 we trialed our first whole site picnic for the children and their families. The Easter Bush Magic Picnic was held at Bush Magic park near the Aquatic Centre in North Adelaide. The easter bunny visited and the children had an easter egg hunt as well as songs with Di. It was such a great success that we will be making it an annual event.

Teachers have been trialing ABLES which is a computer program designed to capture students with special needs progress in their learning. We have been adapting it for our cohort of younger children and will evaluate the outcomes to see if we will implement the program as part of our reporting and accountability.

As is usual the Staff have attended much professional learning and development. A particularly exciting experience was the whole day training for the Move2Learn program which we are planning to run across the centre. It links the progressive acquisition of body movement skills with learning.

With thanks to the Fund Raising Committee we have been able to employ a carpenter to build our cubby 'Mansion'. Purposefully designed with a ramp, wide verandah and wide door, all of the children can access it easily.

We also purchased a small rainwater tank to support the children's awareness of sustainability, along with our worm farm and compost bin.

A very exciting highlight has been the winning of a Variety bus for the centre. This will enable us to include visits to the library and excursions as a regular part of the curriculum.

Variety, The Children's Charity has been very generous with The Briars and we were also given a grant to assist with moving our Briar Rd boundary fence. This has given us space to put the Liberty swing in a more accessible area and has increased our paddock considerably. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our gratitude for their continued support of The Briars.

4. SITE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Attached is a copy of The Briars Site Improvement Plan. In 2014, with the release of the DECD Strategic Plan 2014-2017, we decided to review and align our priorities, and the format, with the DECD document.



Three AST teachers have been assigned portfolio's addressing each of our priorities and are responsible for the implementation, reporting and reviewing of the specific programs. Below are their reports:

The Briars Early Intervention Group

Rosetta Williams (Program Co-Ordinator)

Pre Early Entry Children access The Early Intervention Program for a two and a half hour session, one morning per week. The children engage in the learning experiences planned and delivered for the enrolled pre-schoolers.

Early Intervention Parents, grandparents and carers engage in learning around their children's development and learning in a separate space at the same time. Each session is planned and supported by a senior Briars teacher. Topics are presented by invited guests, including parents of past Briars children and Briars senior staff. The Early Intervention program is compiled of topics such as:

- Programing and planning at The Briars
- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)
- School selection and transition processes
- Sensory programs for children
- DECD Special Education Resource Unit (SERU)
- The Briars Outdoor Learning Program
- Key word AUSLAN Signing
- DECD psychologist role in preschool
- DECD speech therapist role in pre school

Past Briars parent sessions are informal sessions for discussion and information sharing which increases the comfort and confidence level of current Early Intervention parents.

The program was available for 14 children each week over the two designated mornings. However, not all families displayed the same level of commitment to the program and this was reflected in some inconsistent attendances. Experience from planning and delivering the program, in previous years, has enabled The Briars staff to be strategic in the management of groups and the spontaneous conversation they generate.

The cohort of families was complex and at times, required close direction to sustain focus on the topic at hand. However, families that had the most engagement experienced positive transitions and enrolments into the preschool program.

Feedback from participating families was positive both face to face and in written form. The program enabled sustainable friendships to build between the parents as well as a high level of trust of The Briars staff from parents.

Outdoor Learning Program

P Nikki Summerfield (Program Co-Ordinator)

In 2015 the Outdoor Learning Program increased to four mornings each week between 9.30am and 11.45am. It continued to be staffed by one teacher and one ECW and up to 5 children in each group. The children were selected from those in their eligible preschool year rather than those children who were attending the centre one day each week as Early Entry.

Ongoing feedback from educators involved in the program allowed me to group the children more strategically and during the year it was observed that the children involved in the program on a regular basis began to bond and in some cases form friendships. Staff changes were kept to a minimum to allow for continuity.

In January 2015 a new cubby was constructed in the paddock. It included a raised deck with access ramp and areas wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. This was followed in March 2015 by the installation of a 2100L steel rainwater tank with a tap for watering access by the children. In term 4 2015 the front perimeter fence of the centre was moved towards the road, increasing the paddock area quite significantly.

The Living Eggs program was once again implemented in Term 2 2015 and the program kept 6 of the chicks for the outdoor program and one more chick was purchased locally. The worm farm continued successfully throughout the year.

AAC was increased to include 2 dedicated Supertalkers as well as the 10 Big Point switches and educators are using these across the paddock including in the tent, cubby, on gates & taps. We are intending to increase this communication support to include fixed iPads attached to the cubby, quarry and in the tent.

Data was collected by all participating teachers via daily checklists measuring children's level of engagement in a range of outdoor experiences across five levels: not interested, emerging, developing, practicing and consistent. The checklists also allow for any specific comments and notes pertaining to individual children or the program. This data was also graphed.

Observational notes were recorded for data purposes (chart attached below) on the collecting, counting and storing of the eggs, maintaining the worm farm, sorting food scraps and rubbish into specific bins labeled as suitable for the chickens, worms or rubbish.

Parent feedback was collected in Term 4 using a questionnaire (attached below) and was extremely positive. This will be repeated next year as well as initial surveys from the parents of children attending the Early Intervention program.



QUESTIONNAIRE
OUTDOOR LEARNING



Weekly Data
Chart.docx

Alternative and Augmentative Communication Program

Helen Macleod (Program Co-Ordinator)

The children at The Briars are offered a range of alternative and augmented communication (AAC) systems as they all have complex communication needs. The centre is engineered to support and assist the children to communicate as they participate in the program, including in the paddock for the Outdoor Education Program.

One educator and 1 ECW continue to be allocated time to prepare resources, maintain equipment and update the vocabulary on the devices as required by the children and to suit the changing preschool program.

The children have full access during the whole day to a range of voice output devices (VOCA). There are simple 1 message devices such as the Big Points and Big Macks, multiple message devices such as Big Macks, GoTalk devices and SuperTalkers. Two iPads with a Briars version of Proloquo2 Go are permanently fixed in the children's learning area.

Following a trial in 2014 with Liberator Aust, The Briars purchased an Accent device for daily use. The Accent uses a program called Minspeak. Minspeak is an easy way to code vocabulary. Minspeak icons are combined in 2 or 3 part sequences in order to say all the different ideas that the picture codes. Say *drink* by sequencing JUICE with VERB. Say *thirsty* by sequencing JUICE with ADJECTIVE. In this way Minspeak makes systematic use of multi-meaning icons. The Briars was instrumental in ensuring that two children transition to the same school where they are supported to continue with this method of communication.

A questionnaire about a child's communication is issued to families at the initial NEP. The questionnaire is later completed by educators. When used in conjunction with an iPad usage survey, which is also completed by educators, they provide the data to develop goals specific to the child for communication, access methods and skills levels eg has the child developed an understanding of cause and effect.

During the year we have purchased 6 SuperTalkers, 6 Big Macks with levels, and 6 multi message devices. The Big Points simple single message VOCA are now considered as consumables at The Briars. A number of switch adapted toys were also purchased for children to develop their understanding of cause and effect. The total expenditure was approximately \$10,000.

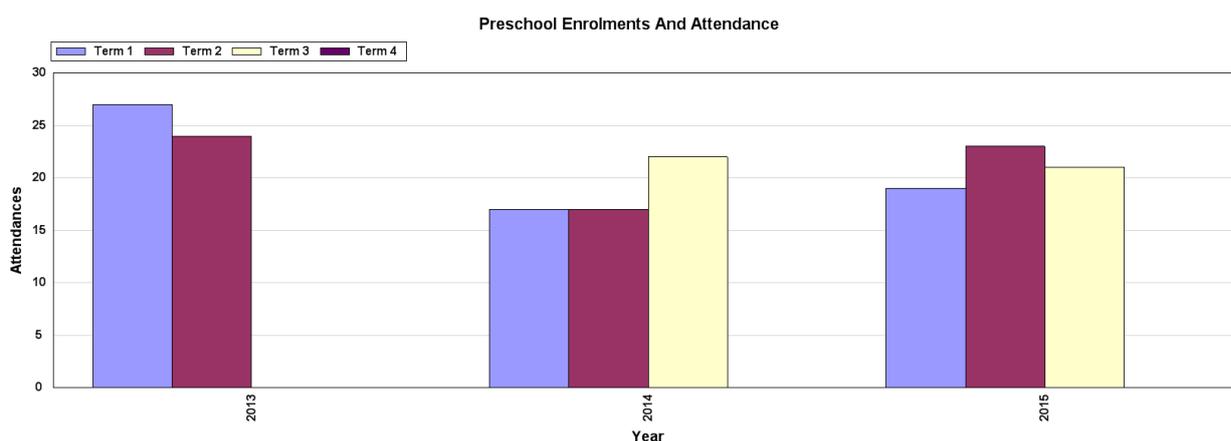
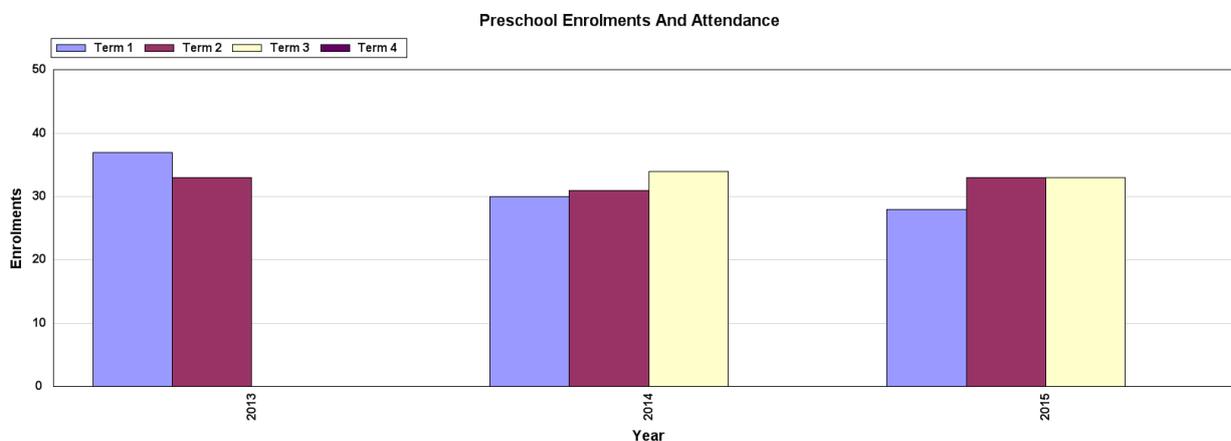
Professional learning related to AAC and device use for educators was conducted after school hours and also specifically for the groups of parents in the Early Intervention groups. Several families received AAC support for their children's communication in the form of picture symbols cards and simple communication boards.

5. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

This year we did not receive any intervention or support programs provided by DECD.

6. STUDENT DATA

6.1 Enrolments



Enrolment by Term				
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2013	37	33		
2014	30	31	34	
2015	28	33	33	

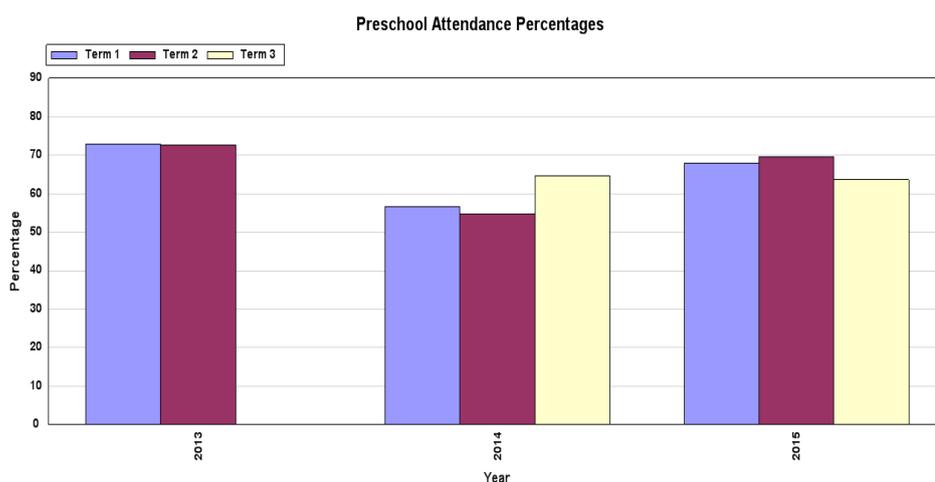
Based on person counts in the two week reference period each term.
 Excludes pre-entry.
 Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

The information provided by the Term 3 Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information systems is an inaccurate picture of the number of enrolments for 2015. In term three and four we had 66 enrolments

Children with disabilities are eligible to attend early entry and with Same Day Start this occurs in term 3 and 4 of the year. The number of enrolments at The Briars increases in these terms and includes children who transfer to The Briars during the year if they are accepted by the intake panel consisting of myself, the disability coordinator, the educational psychologist and the regional manager.

Although there has been some improvement, there has been slow understanding/uptake of information about Same Day Start circulated to agencies that refer children to The Briars. This has meant confusion for many of the families about when children with disabilities can start and when their eligible preschool year might be. This has impacted on our enrolments and I am of the belief that it will be 2016/2017 before we will have consistent numbers of eligible children enrolling at the beginning of the year (as well as children transferring to The Briars during their eligible year).

6.2 Attendance



Attendance Percentage				
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2013 Centre	73.0	72.7		
2014 Centre	56.7	54.8	64.7	
2015 Centre	67.9	69.7	63.6	
2013 State	88.7	88.0		
2014 State	89.9	88.8	86.1	
2015 State	90.5	88.5	86.3	

The attendance figures for The Briars varies according to the cohort of children enrolled. If we have a high number of children with severe medical needs our attendance decreases. We ask families to keep their children home if they are not well as many of the children are at risk and may be hospitalized even with a common cold.

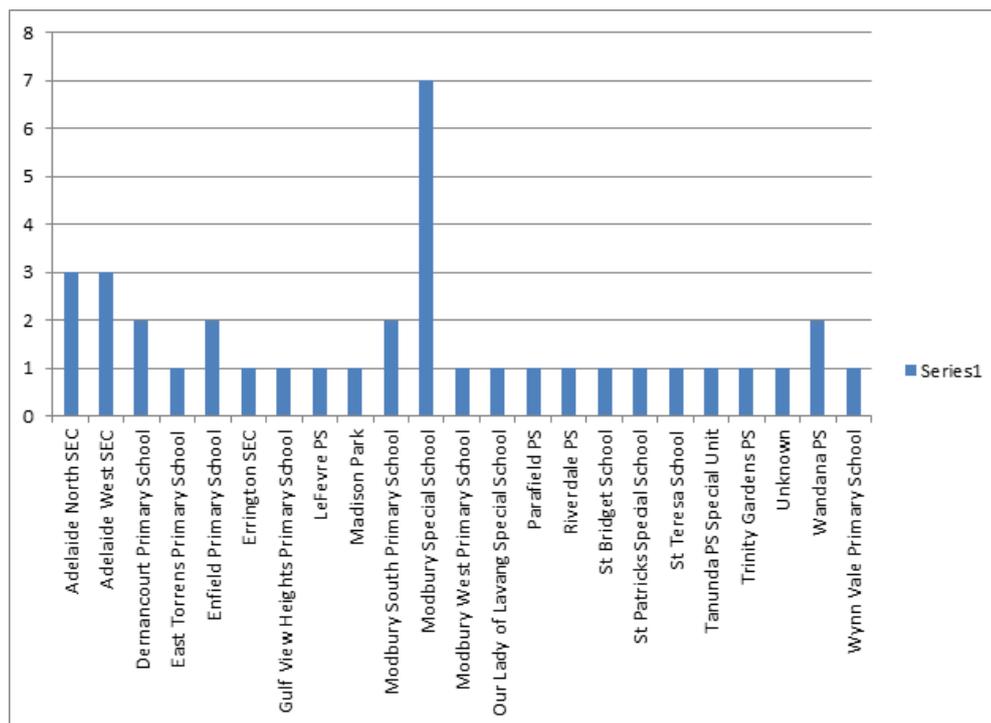
The Briars Early Intervention Foundation Group that is funded by the Increasing Attendance grant continues to flourish. Because of its success it will no longer be a pilot but will be an established program operating two mornings per week in terms 1 and 2. The outcome continues to be excellent with the connection between new parents and current parents easing the children into the centre allaying parent anxiety and increasing new children's attendances. This has been evidence by parent feedback. (see Priority report)

6.3 Destination – Feeder Schools

Site	Type	2013	2014	2015
		0723 - Colonel Light Gardens Primary School		16.7
1372 - Kilparrin Tch & Assessment Sch & Ser		16.7		
1405 - Modbury Special School		16.7	33.3	25.0
0844 - The Grove Education Centre	Govt.		16.7	
0548 - Black Forest Primary School				12.5
1043 - East Marden Primary School				12.5
0474 - Trinity Gardens Primary School				12.5
9021 - St Patrick's Special School		33.3	16.7	
9127 - Suneden Special School		16.7		
9082 - St Joseph's School - Tranmere	Non-Govt.		33.3	
9081 - Our Lady of the Visitation School				12.5
8235 - St Brigid's Catholic Primary School				12.5
9036 - St Brigid's School				12.5
Total		100.1	100.0	100.0

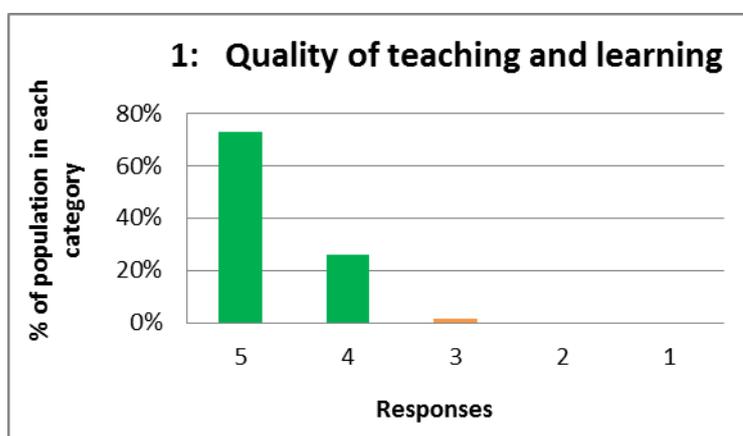
The above data is inappropriate and irrelevant. Taken from the enrolment form it does not reflect the destinations of the children as, firstly, the children are not allocated placement until the end of term three, and secondly, many parents are not yet privy to the Special Options process and do not understand the possible pathways their children can have. Below is an accurate chart of destination schools for children exiting The Briars at the end of 2015.

Destination sites for children exiting The Briars during 2015



7. CLIENT OPINION

To obtain parent opinion we used the Preschool Parent Survey 2015 tool.



Parent Comments – unabridged

Very happy with all teaching aspects. The children love coming into preschool.

We have been incredible impressed with the high quality of teaching experiences facilitated at The Briars.

All staff have excellent qualifications and understand my child's day to day needs.

I always feel my child and all children are safe and supported by all staff.

Since my child has been coming to this school he has really come out of his shell and is more sociable.

This is my son's first term so we are all learning about the school but so far we are happy and he loves to go there.

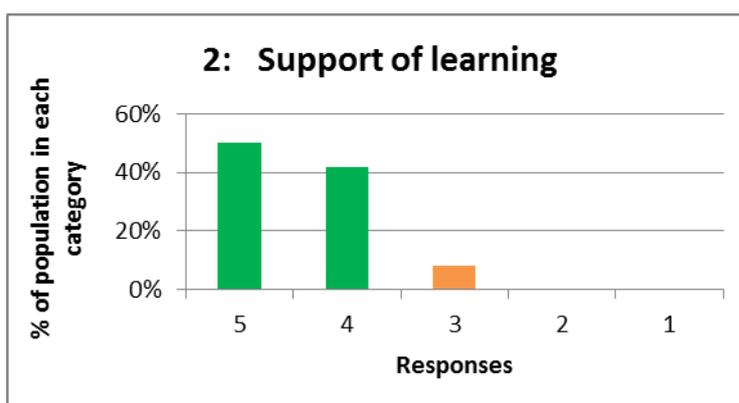
I am satisfied with the way the preschool has gone about making learning enjoyable for my child.

My daughter really showed a lot of improvement while going to The Briars. I am very happy.

We are currently very happy with our child's teacher however the previous teacher made our experience at The Briars difficult and communication was difficult. If I was to answer the questions in relation to the previous teacher the answers would be very different.

Exemplary standards, attitude and genuine concerns for the students.

Transport system needs more communication and a more directed schedule. Many times the taxi service is late or very early. At times very rude to Emmett and my partner. Entirely NOT the Briars fault.



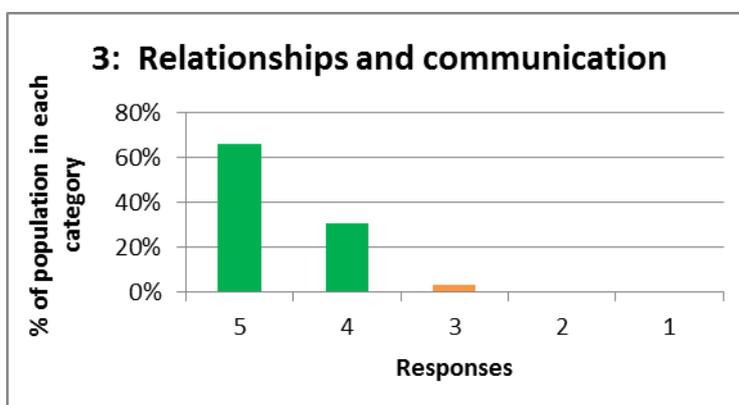
Parent Comments – unabridged

The support for my child is beyond amazing. I was comfortable in knowing the staffs best interest is in the kids and that my child was safe at preschool. My child really enjoyed going to preschool.

We are currently very happy with our child's teacher however the previous teacher made our experience at The Briars difficult and communication was difficult. If I was to answer the questions in relation to the previous teacher the answers would be very different.

The children are given all the time they need and gently encouraged to succeed.

Ardi has developed skills to learn how to play with others, social skills and a lot of confidence he never had before.



Parent Comments – unabridged

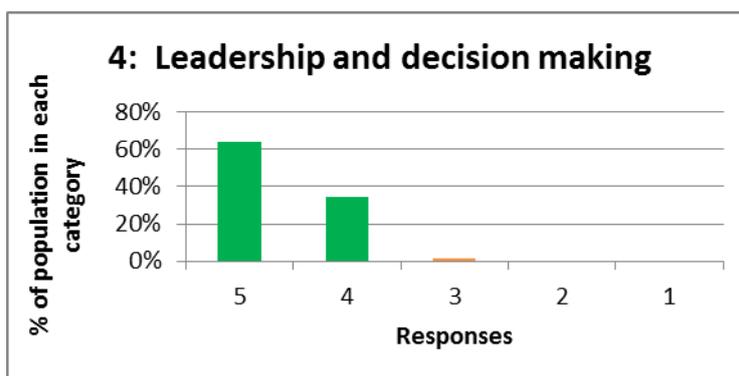
All the teachers and staff are very welcoming and always smiling.

I feel all children are respected and extra time is taken to understand what they need. All staff are fantastic at The Briars.

The communication with the preschool and parents is outstanding. I thoroughly enjoy reading what my child has done throughout the day in his diary (also easy to express concern etc)

We are currently very happy with our child's teacher however the previous teacher made our experience at The Briars difficult and communication was difficult. If I was to answer the questions in relation to the previous teacher the answers would be very different.

The staff go above and beyond their duties and make the transition of detaching to the school morning and arvo easy for the parents.



Parent Comments - unabridged

I think Judith Candy is a fantastic director as well as the staff. The Briars preschool is amazing. Highly commended and recommended!

Parent General Comments - unabridged

Thank you so much for making my daughters kindy a truly wonderful place for her to grow.

Just a small matter regarding DECS 'failed' communication with the school in regards to Caamil's taxi support. We have to repeatedly email DECS and threatening legal action to solve the matter. Someone in DECS wasn't concentrating on passing on the information. It shouldn't have happened. In the future I hope a better communication from DECS to the school and parents.

Great work. Keep up the core values and great outcomes and goals will be achieved. Wish more schools or preschools were built.

Teachers at this site need support and more funding to help them improve the lives of the children. Briars is a great site.

Happy my little one has come on in leaps and bounds since starting couldn't be happier.

I have only good things to say about my child's time at The Briars. The staff here are amazing!

My child has developed and improved all her skills since attending The Briars. It's a fantastic preschool.

Briars Early Learning school has been a fantastic opportunity for my child and myself. We both were extremely comfortable with the school and environment.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

All staff, Governing Council members, volunteers and students have current criminal history screenings.

9. FINANCIAL STATEMENT



Balance Sheet
2015.pdf



Profit & Loss
Statement 2015.pdf