

The Briars

Site Improvement Plan
2014-2017



aligned with DECD Strategic Plan
2014-2017

Welcome

The Briars Special Early Learning Centre is a complex unique site that is an anomaly in nearly every aspect.

Unlike any other early childhood site, we are a DECD Special Option sitting within Children's Services but not in scope of National Quality Standards. This means that although we are funded as a preschool we operate like a special school and are accountable under the Education Act. For example, we have a Site Improvement Plan instead of a Quality Improvement Plan, our teachers and support workers are not restricted to having early childhood degrees or certificates, and although we average twenty or more staff, there is no formal leadership structure other than the Director.

We have all of the additional complexities such as transport, health support and personal care that special schools have, as well as the significant role of transitioning the children through the Special Options process into their future pathways.

Considered a centre of expertise, we are a State-wide Consultancy providing support and training for teachers across South Australia in schools and preschools, and provide a Disability Awareness Outreach service for preschools.

We strive for excellence, to earn trust, to build and strengthen relationships – especially with children, their parents, carers and the community.

While we are an anomaly, we believe that it is very important for us to be recognised as operating within the DECD system. It is because of this that we have aligned our Site Improvement plan with the DECD Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017.

This plan is intended to guide us through the coming years and is to be used in conjunction with another document that is fluid and more specific with the day to day workings of the site.

Vision

A centre that supports the learning of children with disabilities through the provision of a rich curriculum, delivered in an environment that celebrates diversity and that belongs to the children and their community.

Values

We embrace the values that are the foundation of ethical behaviour in the South Australian public sector:

- professionalism
- collaboration and engagement
- courage and tenacity
- trust
- respect
- honesty and integrity

Developing children's communication is fundamental to improving children's learning outcomes. At The Briars all of the children have complex communication needs. Addressing these needs is intrinsic to The Briars SIP with AAC and Inclusive Technologies underpinning all priorities.

Our priorities

Higher standards of learning achievement

The Briars will be a centre of expertise where children, staff and families are supported and encouraged to achieve, grow, challenge and engage in an equitable and safe environment.

We will:

- maximise each and every child's learning, to help them become the most successful learners they can be, confident individuals and informed citizens

The Briars will enable children to be successful and confident learners through the development of communication skills within an adjusted play based curriculum.

- build capacity and continue to improve teaching quality

The Briars staff will ensure that we build upon our current knowledge and practice to provide the latest, proven resources and strategies to develop children's communication skills, and technologies to access the curriculum.

Improve health and wellbeing

The Briars will provide targeted education and family initiatives to support the 'whole child'.

We will:

- Establish targeted interventions to meet every child's learning and developmental needs

The Briars staff will empower the children to actively navigate their environment promoting a sense of self and self-esteem by developing a curriculum that addresses the needs of all children taking into account preferred learning environments.

- Work with families to ensure every child has the foundation for success in school, the workplace, the community, and life.

The Briars will support families to transition into the DECD system through developing their confidence and knowledge.

Engage children, families and community

Families will be partners in their child's learning.

We will:

- Build our capacity to engage with children, young people, families and the wider community in our planning and decision making.

The Briars will facilitate better communication and information sharing to support parent and community involvement in our planning and decision making.

Higher standards of learning achievement

Ideas for Future Planning:



Higher standards of learning achievement

The Briars will be a centre of expertise where children, staff and families are supported and encouraged to achieve, grow, challenge and engage in an equitable and safe environment.

We will:

- enable children to be successful, confident learners through the development of communication skills within an adjusted play based curriculum.
 - ensure that we build upon our current knowledge and practice to provide the latest, proven resources and strategies to develop children's communication skills, and technologies to access the curriculum.
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What success looks like

- Children will be able to actively participate in all planned learning opportunities accessing at their own entry point.
- Children will be developing communication skills specific to their needs that will enable them to be active participants in their learning.
- The Briars will be a professional learning community acquiring new knowledge and trialling contemporary practices.

Key actions

- Provide all planned, adjusted learning opportunities with communication systems and resources to support children's engagement.

- Programming will include the design and preparation of communication resources that are content specific to the planned learning opportunity.
 - Develop individual learning programs integrating the acquisition of specific skills to enable children to communicate.
 - Design communication skills assessment tool.
 - Design a Communications Checklist (for use at initial NEP).
 - Develop individual communication goals.
 - Review data collection and current reporting practice.
 - Research new communication technology and develop resources to improve children's learning outcomes.
 - Review staff meetings to implement opportunities and strategies for professional learning conversations.
 - Staff will be exposed to professional readings, attend relevant conferences and T&D.
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Improve health and wellbeing

Ideas for Future Planning:

Improve health and wellbeing

The Briars will provide targeted education and family initiatives to support the 'whole child'.

We will:

- Develop the natural outdoor environment.
 - Design and implement an Outdoor Education program that offers the children learning experiences from nature and that runs concurrently with the preschool program.
 - Attend relevant conferences, T&D and professional readings.
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What success looks like

- A learning environment that is rich in natural living and non-living resources.
- A curriculum that exposes the children to life cycles and sustainability that sits in the EYLF.
- Parents building links with each other and support agencies independently.
- Children accessing the site prior to Early Entry will be integrated and experience positive separation from families.
- The Briars will have contemporary knowledge and understandings of working with families of children birth to 8 years.

Key actions

- To develop outdoor goals that sit within the EYLF curriculum.
 - To establish a self-contained outdoor learning room.
 - Provide AAC low tech and hi tech communication support.
 - Establish kitchen garden and orchard.
 - To assist children to learn early communication skills through inclusion in the preschool program.
 - For staff to complete online learning "A Practice Guide for Working with Families from birth to 8 years".
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Engage children, families and community

Ideas for Future Planning:

Engage children, families and community

Families will be partners in their child's learning.

We will:

- Enrich communication between The Briars and families through the implementation of communication systems in response to parent need.
 - By supporting the families through developing their confidence, knowledge and capacity, to work in partnership to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities.
 - Continue the Early Intervention Group – parents networking with enrolled parents.
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What success looks like

- A diary system that is relevant and contextual.
- A communication system that is child focussed and allows the children to share information from their day at preschool with their parents.
- Parents building links with each other and support agencies independently.
- The Briars will have contemporary knowledge and understandings of working with families of children birth to 8 years.

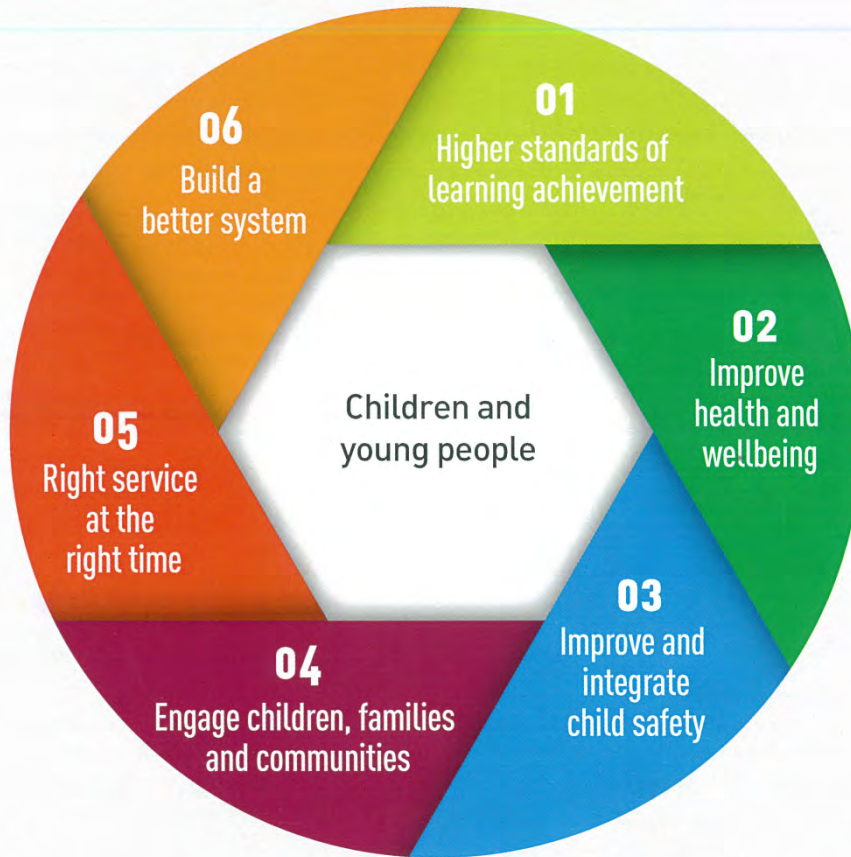
Key actions

- To design a survey tool to collect data from families:
How many parents read diaries?
What do they want to know?
 - Research and purchase school bags to assist in communication for parents.
 - Design and produce children's personal communication book for sharing with families.
 - Establish Facebook page and in 2015 research effectiveness.
 - Review and improve webpage.
 - Acquire feedback of EI program for analysis and review to inform and develop termly parent program.
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Notes for Future Planning...



Six strategic priorities 2014 - 2017



Building a high performing system
A business improvement plan for the Department for Education and Child Development



