

SERVICE CONTEXT STATEMENT

Goolwa Children's Centre is an integrated early childhood service where early childhood educators, allied health professionals, community development staff, families, and the local community collaborate to support the needs of children and their families. As part of the Fleurieu Partnership of schools and preschools, we offer a State-funded program integrated with a Commonwealth-funded long day care service for children from birth to school entry.

Our centre is located in the township of Goolwa, approximately 80 kilometres from Adelaide, on the Murray River near the Coorong and the southern coast. The community's main economic drivers include small business, tourism, and farming. Goolwa Children's Centre is situated in an educational precinct adjacent to Goolwa Primary School and in close proximity to Goolwa Secondary College. Most children who attend our centre reside in Goolwa and nearby areas, including Middleton, Port Elliot and Hindmarsh Island.

Our team comprises both early-career and experienced educators, a Director, an Assistant Director, allied health professionals, and our welcoming reception staff. All educators hold relevant early childhood education qualifications, ranging from certificate III and diplomas to bachelor's degrees and postgraduate qualifications. Our Community Development Coordinator facilitates partnerships and programs with local agencies, supporting families and making referrals. On-site allied health support includes a speech pathologist and occupational therapist who are both available 1.5 days per week, while Community and Family Health Services (CaFHS) operates from the centre five days a week.

Goolwa Children's Centre is licensed to care for 87 children, from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. Building and maintaining strong relationships among children, families, and staff is a core priority that underpins our centre's philosophy. Childcare is delivered through two distinct age groups: Mulga (0-3 years) and Ngawandi (3-6 years). Preschool operates in two sessions: Kukaki (Session A) and Nori (Session B).

The preschool operates Monday to Thursday (8:30am-3:00pm) and Fridays (8:30am-12:30pm) during South Australia school terms. Session A children attend Mondays, Tuesdays, and Friday mornings (even weeks); Session B children attend Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Friday mornings (odd weeks). Long day care is offered Monday to Friday (7:30am-6:00pm), closing for two weeks over the Christmas to New Year period.

Children with additional needs are supported through the Southern Fleurieu Health Service and the Department for Education Preschool Support Program. Our curriculum is play-based, with intentional teaching delivered to smaller groups throughout the day.

Both childcare and preschool programs close for two full days each year to enable whole-staff professional development. The preschool program has an additional three full day closures each year for further staff professional development.

Our improvement goals and priorities focus on supporting the development of children's oral language skills. Each year our team of staff collaborate to analyse the needs of our children and families, and to engage in critical reflection and forward planning. During our whole site closure in January we commit to ongoing improvements of our pedagogy by working as a cohesive team, engaging in critical reflection, and setting clear collaborative goals during whole site closure days, staff meetings, team meetings and reflections.