Our Preschool is a part time centre, servicing the rural town of Mt Compass and the surrounding area. Mt Compass is on the main road between Victor Harbour and Adelaide (60 km to the north). The kindergarten is situated next to the Mt Compass Area School (MCAS), and the vast majority of our children transition to MCAS.

Nestled within the community for over 30 years the kindergarten is now welcoming many of the next generation of locals. New families have also been moving into the area, attracted by recent housing developments and the small town lifestyle. In term 4 our enrolment peaked at 35 children.

This growth in our community has already impacted on our kindergarten program and we have moved forward to meet the delights and challenges of growth.

Strong bonds exist within the Mt Compass community and we are fortunate to have a high level of involvement and support from families at our centre.

Jay Elmslie  
Director  
On Behalf of Staff

Casey Nash  
Chairperson  
On Behalf of Council
2010
The Delights and Challenges

An overarching theme of 2010 was growth. The town of Mt Compass is growing and with it the preschool. Growth could result in less to go around. Less space, less time, less quality. This was the challenge for our preschool community and we turned less into more.

Our way of looking at this growth was to see a bubbling over of relationships, richness and complexity. The more families that become a part of our community the greater the diversity, the more varied the needs, the more complex the responses. The preschool community anticipated and meet these changes admirably. By working together, planning and anticipating change, supporting each other, and making clear and constructive decisions we were able to maintain a high level of parent satisfaction in what the preschool offers children and families.

Data collected and analysed by Regional Office Staff found that relationships within our preschool are very healthy. Relationships between educators and children are a key predictor of the quality of the learning environment. Our score on this scale indicated a highly supportive environment in which relationships between educators, children and families are promoting wellbeing and learning.

2010 was also a year in which we had a significant number of children with additional needs at a time when funding for support was stretched thinly across our region. The quality, dedication and care of our staff and volunteers enabled the preschool to continue to provide an inclusive, supportive and quality education and care program for all children. The Governing Council played a significant role in ensuring that preschool resources were allocated to meet the needs of all children attending. We were further supported in our endeavours by key Regional Office staff.

So all in all what could have become a difficult year, grew into a year of pulling together and finding strength, skills, passion, dedication and decisiveness in our community as a whole.

Our success can be measured in the quality learning outcomes of the children, evidenced in their learning stories and individual portfolios; the distance travelled by children in specialised support programs; the feedback from our parent community; and the scoring of the centre in terms of quality relationships.

We finished the year with a walkathon along Silver Sands Beach. It was a very well attended event with mothers, fathers, grandparents, preschool children and their siblings joining preschool staff for the walk. We raised over $200 to put towards our World Vision Sponsor Program of a family in Swaziland.

“This is my friend, Dad” is how one child introduces his father to another child. It is a useful reminder about how a child’s perspective on life may differ. In our work it is important to anticipate, consider and listen to the child’s perspective.
1. Site Improvement Plan and Strategic Directions

1.1. Excellence in Learner Achievement

Implementing the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and use of the Relationships Scale.

**Actions**
- Being mindful of the child’s perspective
- Attended Professional Development on Relationship Scaling and EYLF
- In light of EYLF: reviewed format/process of developing learning stories; summative reports; reporting to parents
- Programmed additional time for completion of learning stories
- Professional Development: Brain Development in Early Childhood; SMART training (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma)
- Explored other relationships within preschool environment, in the light of current research about early brain development and stress related trauma.

**Outcomes**
- .7 increase on relationship scale to attain an overall score that indicates a highly supportive learning environment
- Anecdotal records collected over time and learning stories show an improvement in learner outcomes. They also show that individual children enter and leave preschool with different needs and strengths. What some children will spend their kindergarten year working towards, others have firmly in place on entering kindergarten.

**Implications**
- We have a very useful, informative tool to measure learning outcomes in the Reflect Respect, Relate RRR document.
- We can supplement this tool with other measures when it provides information that will make a difference to children’s learning
- Contemporary research into brain development and stress related trauma has implications for learning in the early years and building constructive relationships with parents

1.2. Improved Learner Engagement & Wellbeing

To improve preschool children’s experience of the transition from preschool to school

**Actions**
- Being mindful of the child’s perspective
- Built on resources and experiences to support children’s transition to school
- Identified children who may be particularly vulnerable when transitioning to school and provided additional support to these children and their families
- Modified pre-entry program in response to increased enrolment
- Used parent/child/school feedback to shape and modify transition program
- Develop stronger links with Play group

**Outcomes**
- A dialogue between the school and preschool about Transition is ongoing.
- Specific information provided to parents to support children transitioning
- A more flexible pre-entry program.
- Playgroup and Preschool are under the one financial umbrella, greater support
Implications
- Further develop relationship with playgroup

1.3. Special Site Focus
To investigate the rural care program proposal

Actions
- Determined that rural care model probably the most appropriate for Mt Compass
- Committee formed to investigate
- Preschool staff visited rural care program based in kindy
- A draft needs survey developed
- A report on Licensing and Standards requirement tabled
- Advice received to delay any upgrades until after the impact of new standards is fully understood

Outcomes
- The rural care program is on hold
- Governing Council is now looking at how to upgrade existing outdoor area with current funds for the benefit of children currently attending preschool

The decision to self fund had a substantial impact on the preschool in several ways. The idea came from the Governing Council and reflected both the high value the parent community places on early childhood education and the Council’s own perception of itself as proactive and decisive. It meant that pressure could be immediately alleviated by reducing the numbers of children attending each session. In addition, this level of support from the Council was very reaffirming for preschool staff.

The decision to support the playgroup in administrative and financial ways has lead to a greater sharing of early childhood practice. We hope that stronger links between the two will lead to improved transitions for children and families into preschool.

The two major achievements of the Governing Council during 2010 are
- The completion of an $11,000.00 security fence around the preschool
- A very well attended social night. Feedback, especially from families new to the community was very positive.

Analysis of Self Review Findings

In 2010 our site self review focused on the three principles:
- Listen and Respond
- Attend to Culture
- Target Resources

2010 was a year of considerable change and increased complexity at the site (brought on by increased enrolment). Our self review revealed preschool staff and council were able to respond to and manage these changes. In relation to all three principles strengths; areas for improvement; and effective plans and processes were identified using an inquiry approach as is reported in the Self Review Validation Report. The validation team (Richard Costi, Regional Director; Pam Lutze, Early Childhood Consultant, and Preschool Directors: Jakub Tuma and Kristie Werner) congratulated Mt Compass preschool on a successful self session of preschool and a policy statement in relations to future need for self funding.

The most significant Council decisions made during 2010 were:
- For the preschool to self fund an extra session of preschool and a policy statement in relations to future need for self funding
- To consolidate our relationship with Playgroup

2. The Governing Council

The Governing Council experienced some membership changes during 2010. At the close of the year membership was as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>Casey Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Annette Paschke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Kylie Szolnoki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Jay Elmslie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Jen Gilligan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Teresa Matthews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Felicity McInnes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Amanda McFarlane</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The most significant Council decisions made during 2010 were:
- For the preschool to self fund an extra session of preschool
review and validation. The Validation Report concluded that the elements of shared leadership, inclusive family focus, data usage for future planning and key policy decisions made significant positive contributions to the overall operation of the preschool.

Data used by the Self Review included:
- Relationships scaling (from the Reflect, Respect, Relate document)
- Parent Satisfaction Survey
- Parent Contact Survey and interviews
- Children’s Learning Stories and portfolios
- Enrolment statistics
- Anecdotal recordings
- Staff meetings
- Financial Audits/Management

3. PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

This year the parent satisfaction survey was conducted in term 3. The response rate was 45%. The results were extremely favourable across all four themes, as is evidenced by the following graph.

A summary of comments included in survey responses follows:

What do you like best about Mt Compass Preschool Centre? 12 respondents
- The environment and staff (friendly, relaxed, approachable, bright, country feel, rural, open space, location, small size, proximity to school)
- The education and care program (creative, imaginative, good, diverse, fun, non-discriminatory, many activities)
- Children’s response to preschool (happy, loves it, learning well)

What do you like least about Mt Compass Preschool Centre? 3 respondents
- Size of groups, need for extra preschool sessions
- Size of facilities
- Car park

What one thing would you like to see changed about Mt Compass Preschool Centre? 8 respondents
- Facilities (car park, more inside space)
- Smaller numbers of children attending per session
- Pick up from school bus
- More parent involvement

Implications:
There is clearly a high level of satisfaction amongst the families who responded to this survey. Governing Council and Staff can feel reassured that they are on ‘the right track’. The areas of concern raised: facilities and the changing demands brought on by higher enrolments, are issues currently being dealt with by the preschool. Parent involvement is always on the preschool’s agenda as the parent body changes each term.

Attendance and Enrolment Data
As is shown in the following graph enrolment has increased steadily over the last 3 years.

Due to the way staffing is determined funding for sessions and staff does not always match current need. As our enrolment and attendance climbed
during first term we started the second term with large numbers of children attending each session. Staff and Council with the support of Regional Staff worked collaboratively to address this issue and we were funded for an extra session. Council took an unprecedented step to self fund an additional session in the 4th term. This decision enabled the preschool to reduce the numbers of children attending each session. The preschool will start 2011 with an enrolment of 27, slightly lower than anticipated, and will be funded for 5 sessions a week.

Financial Reports

- Profit and Loss January through December 2009
- Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss

Please see attached papers.