

Poonindie Early Childhood Centre is located 18km North of Port Lincoln in the small outlying rural township of Poonindie. The land upon which the township sits was originally the land of the Barnjarla people. Poonindie was established in 1850 (to 1894) by the Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide, Augustus Short and was initially run as a training institution for young Aboriginal people from Adelaide schools. It later became a Christian community made up of Aboriginal people from various locations. A small number of residents remained until 1910s. Some of the residence were sent to Point Pearce, some were transferred to Point McLeay. Families who went to Point Pearce included the Adams, Buckskin, Milera, Newchurch, Power, Taylor, Wanganeen, Williams and Yates. The Varcoe, Chester and Yates families later moved onto Point Pearce. Some of these families have descendants still living in and around Port Lincoln and the Yorke Peninsula.

The Poonindie Kindergarten commenced in 1971, firstly as a playgroup run by parents, Mesdames Coral Whittaker and Colleen Tee. In 1971 Mrs Lois Sampson (a trained teacher), volunteered her time for four years. In 1975 we again find parents, Mesdames Coral Whittaker and Bev Gartner, in charge.

In 1987 the first of the paperwork stated with the Children's Services Office under the "Poonindie Outreach Programme". A year later the group became officially known as "Poonindie Pre-School Centre". Our new building (that we are in now) was opened in 2004 by our first kindy Director Cindy Fitzpatrick.

Poonindie Early Childhood Centre currently is a part time, Category 1 Centre with an enrolment capacity of 20 children. Our service is co-located on the same grounds as the Poonindie Community Learning Centre (Primary School); however it operates as a standalone site. The centre is entitled to 4 Pupil Free Days per year, which enables staff to engage in professional learning aligned to the centres improvement priorities and the directions of our local DECD Port Lincoln Partnership. The Pupil Free Days are endorsed by our Governing Council.

Our Preschool is presently staffed with a Director, a teacher, and 2 ECW's, one of which is preschool support/Artist in Residence. The centre operates during the Department For Education (DFE) term dates (South Australia).

In 2021, after reflecting upon barriers to our early childhood education service, our educators/Governing Council endorsed new session times for sustainability of our service and our community needs. Parking is limited out the front of our site, however, parents often choose to park next door on the school site, next to their oval and walk across. Our street can get extremely busy during drop off/pick up times with big enrolments at the Poonindie School and different services provided at our site during the week. We recognise that the earlier starting times to our service will help with street congestion and safety.

At Poonindie Early Childhood Centre we value nature play, wonderment, curiosity and caring for the environment. We regularly access the Poonindie Reserve for exploration, research, play-based/active experiences with risky play. Our site has fondly named it "The Beyond".

Playgroup is also offered on a Friday 9-11am and a teacher is employed for WHS/ curriculum reasons. Child and Family Health Services (CAFHS) visits are twice a year, usually Term's 1 and 3. Due to the co-location of our Preschool within the Poonindie Community Learning Centre grounds, transition is a natural and seamless process as children are already familiar with the layout of the school. Specific transition visits occur in Terms 1, 2, 3, and Term 4, the children begin their "official" transition sessions which are built up in time as the term progresses. A larger proportion of our children feed into this school although 1-2 families each year may choose to enrol at the private school in Port Lincoln.