

E-Kindy Submission

Mrs Julie Barnett, [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

24th September, 2012

Dear Mr Bennett,

I write in support of E-Kindy for 2013.

No Kindergarten Available Locally

I live near [REDACTED] a small rural community north of Bundaberg. There is no kindergarten program available in this community. The nearest kindergarten programs available are in Bundaberg which is an hour's drive away, too far for a small child to travel and still gain the full benefit of learning.

Currently, when I travel to Bundaberg for shopping, my child is ready for a sleep within 2 hours. As an early childhood teacher I am fully aware of the futility of engaging tired, grumpy children in a structured academic program. To attend a kindergarten where my child simply indulges in free play and sleep is not making the experience worth the expense in time and money.

[REDACTED] is a community that has little to offer its youngest members. I currently facilitate a playgroup. Prior to starting this earlier this year, there was no playgroup available. This group caters for a large age range, from birth until children begin prep. This doesn't provide the kindergarten age group focused attention and activities they need before beginning prep.

Education Needs To Be Rated Highly in Our Community

For children to succeed academically, education needs to be rated highly in the community.

[REDACTED] State School is a National Partnerships School. What does this mean for me as a parent? The school has been scoring very poorly on nationwide academic testing, namely NAPLAN. Education needs a boost at this school. E-kindy is an early intervention program. It will help to rate education more highly in the community.

[REDACTED] doesn't even have a public library available for our young children to borrow from. Being at the southern tip of Gladstone Regional Council, [REDACTED] residents are expected to travel to [REDACTED] to use a library. For me, that is an hour's drive. E-kindy, if run through Distance Education, would provide a library service.

Pre-Prep Program Needed

With the current intake ages for Prep, children need a pre-prep program. Those children born after 30th June are wanting to learn to read and write. How do I know this? My child asks me constantly to help him read and he spends a lot of time play writing. For those children born in the early part of the year, a pre-prep program would enable them to gain fine motor skills before they get to school. I believe that a good kindergarten program provides children with the appropriate skills and a positive attitude to school. With the right start children have the opportunity to do their very best in our education system.

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Kindy Programs Needed In Schools

For rural communities with no kindergarten available, I would like to see in-school kindergartens. This would not take children away from existing kindergartens. Schools have the resources available to begin kindergarten programs, a very expensive operation in communities when the place of operation needs to be safe and be built to appropriate specifications. Rural schools often don't have full classes and so there is room available in existing classes negating the necessity to employ extra teachers or to find additional classrooms. Most rural schools have appropriate facilities and resources as Prep and Kindy require similar needs.

My preference is for a kindergarten program to run from [REDACTED] State School as I believe that would be of greater benefit to the children concerned. There are certainly enough children in the community to make it worthwhile. I currently know of 10 children in the age group and I, by no means, know even ¼ of the children in this community. Children would also come from the many small communities around which do not have kindergartens – from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and possibly from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as well.

Please don't delay in implementing E-Kindy. My child needs to have kindergarten available to him in 2013, 2014 is too late.

Yours sincerely,

Julie A Barnett
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