



Directory to building a **dynamic service**

Contents

Our consultancy service can be tailored to:

- Long day care
- OSHC
- Family day care
- Preschool
- Budget based funded services
- Health sector
- Early years of school

We will work with what you need.

Gowrie SA is on Kurna land and we acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first Nations people of Australia and that they are the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waterways throughout our country.



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Improve your competitive edge by building the quality of learning in your service with Gowrie SA as your mentoring, consulting and coaching partner.



You choose the focus – and the time.

Your needs are at the heart of our service, where we can support your quality improvement goals through professional learning made to fit you.

Our experts, led by Dr Kaye Colmer, CEO of Gowrie SA, live and breathe early childhood. We pride ourselves on our innovative, specialised knowledge. Kaye's completed PhD research demonstrated professional learning and strong leadership as keys to competitive, high quality early childhood services.

We can create packages of professional learning that draw on high level research to make your service the best it can be. Our consultants have post-graduate qualifications in early childhood education, leadership, infant mental health, and social work; and years of experience in our education and care programs and parenting programs.

We look forward to this year of learning as a community to build a brighter future for South Australian children.

Call us and let's get started:
8234 5219

Our Consultants



Dr Kaye Colmer

PhD EC Leadership, M of Ed Leadership, Grad Dip of Child Development, Dip T, Dip Bus

As CEO of Gowrie SA for over 20 years, Kaye is energised by the challenge of change and the continuous evolution of programs and is particularly thrilled to see educators' growth and commitment to strong outcomes for children and families. Her PhD explored how leadership and collective professional learning work together to build strong services which in turn, nurture educators' sense of professional identity, and build rich collaborative communities.



Mary Scales

B ECE, Dip of Teaching, Adv Dip of Community Sector Mgt, Cert IV TAE, COS-P facilitator

Mary began work as a kindergarten teacher and has held a number of leadership and project management roles, most recently leading the Universal Access project funded by DECD which assisted educational leaders and early childhood teachers in 76 services. She has strong knowledge of early childhood curriculum and pedagogy and is a firm believer in the value of educators' professional learning to strengthen practice.



Cathy Cameron

MEd EC Leadership, B Ed ECE, Dip T JP, Cert IV TAE, COS-P facilitator

Cathy's career spans experiences working for DECD in country areas as director and teacher in a children's centre, in preschools, rural care and schools. Cathy enjoys the depth of reflective conversations and inspiration through 'practitioner inquiry' that educators share with her. She enjoys learning with educators and the joys of designing projects with services, then seeing their amazing outcomes for children and families.



Cecilia Ebert

Master Infant Mental Health, Master Social Work, Dip Counselling, Dip of Teaching, COS-P facilitator

As a former child care educator and as an Infant Mental Health professional, Cecilia's passion is for working with educators to promote strong relationships between children and their parents, to give educators the keys to decode children's behaviour and to work with educators for healthy mental health and relationship outcomes.



Gloria Lalor-Mundine

Cert ATSI Cultural Competence, Ad Dip Design, Dip Bus Ad, COS-P facilitator

As an Aboriginal woman from the Bundjalung and Kamilaroi Woman Nations in NSW, Gloria has a strong passion for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, strengthening educators' cultural competence and mentoring and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators. She can work with educators towards creating culturally safe places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and get services started on a Reconciliation Action Plan.



Margaret Lovell

B ECE, Dip CS, Cert IV TAE, COS-P facilitator

A career as an educator and director in long day care, OSHC and family day care has given Margaret a dynamic evidence-base to draw on. Margaret is team leader and facilitator in the qualifications team, and is committed to supporting educators and students to explore their own thinking and knowledge to discover ways to enhance their practice.



Jess Shaw

BA Arts, Adv Dip Community Sector Mgt, Dip CS, Cert IV TAE, Cert III Infant Mental Health, COS-P facilitator

After a decade of working in child care as a team leader, Jess is a passionate advocate for early childhood educators, children and families with a particular focus on sustainability and natural play spaces. Her facilitation skills encourage educators to see the possibilities in their own play spaces and how they can transform their programs to foster children's and educators' curiosity.



Rose Tramontin

Adv. Dip. Leadership, Dip CS, Cert IV TAE, COS-P facilitator

With a career spanning 28 years working directly with children and families as acting director, assistant director, educational leader and team leader, Rose understands how to build strong connections between educators and families, and with children. She has worked with educators and students successfully in a variety of coaching and mentoring in diverse early childhood topics.



A child's rights perspective

Australia is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children ask us to honour their rights by looking at them with different eyes in order to empower their right to learn and to know. Listening to children's voices is at the heart of the child's rights perspective. Pre-verbal children also have the capacity to tell their own stories, but are the adults around them listening?

Directors of services are responsible for ensuring that each child's rights are honoured – but how do you assess this?

Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do. This is not simple, but educators working together to think about families and children can create communities of rights around children.

We can help you engage your team to:

- Delve deeper
- Establish processes to ensure children's rights are respected
- Work within a children's rights framework

Circle of Security for Educators

Gowrie SA is unique in offering the Circle of Security (COS-P) 8 week program for educators and directors within the context of early childhood education. The program is interactive and uses video clips, handouts and most importantly the concepts that lie within the program:

- 'Shark music'
- Rupture and Repair
- Positive Intentionality
- Cues and Miscues
- Being with;
- ...to bring to light what is hidden in plain sight about children and relationships.

Testimonial from a director who invested in COS-P for their service highlights the power of this learning for both director and educators:

"Our service made the right decision to offer COS-P for educators to the entire team; it was an expense that I can justify with so many examples of the benefits to the children and families in our service. The educators have always been aware of the children and their relationships; however this opportunity has deepened their reflection of the child's cues."





Reggio Emilia principles and practices

The Italian infant toddler and preschool services in Reggio Emilia have refined a philosophical approach that engages children fully in their learning. In 2012-3, South Australia was fortunate to have Carla Rinaldi as the 'Thinker in Residence'. She visited the Gowrie SA children's programs in her residency and has since written the Re-imagining Childhood report. Carla left South Australia with the challenge of considering the Reggio principles and how they may apply within our South Australian context.

Five of our consultants have attended a study tour to Reggio Emilia and we actively explore the application of Reggio Emilia concepts in our children's programs. We are active in the South Australian Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange network and the Reimagining Childhood project.



We can help you deepen your understanding of the principles in the report, share our learning from the study tour and engage in dialogue about:

- What is Reggio inspired practice?
- What is the history and philosophy underneath it?
- What values exist?
- How can we move beyond changing our physical environments to authentically engage in the principles?

Leadership; it doesn't just happen

"Effective teamwork grows out of work groups that are transformed into teams by appropriate leadership" (Rodd, 2013)

Leadership is at the heart of developing a dynamic service that promotes learning for children and educators. But the question remains – just what kind of leadership is required? In her research into leadership, Kaye Colmer has uncovered several key connections that can make your job as a director much easier. Do you spend all your time helping your team, with no time for yourself? Do you have someone you can turn to when you need guidance or a listening ear?

Where directors create supportive environments, leadership and professional learning grow together with each building on the other.

Achieve great outcomes and motivate teams towards quality improvement goals.

A director's leadership is critical but the leadership behaviours of positional leaders such as team leaders also have a major impact on educators' motivation.

Gain powerful new insights into how you can build fulfilling work environments for your team.

We can help you:

- Understand the leadership required
- Balance leadership with management
- Maximise your time
- Grow as a leader
- Build positive team culture
- Build a fulfilling work environment

Testimonials:

"Leaders co-learning with their teams affirms and motivates educators."

"It has helped me define my role as educational leader. It has enabled me to share what I have learnt with the whole centre."

"I feel that as the Educational Leader and Early Childhood Teacher of our service, I have a great team to work with. We all bring different qualities, strengths and values to our service and as the year has progressed, I see the two qualified Educators in my team gaining in their own leadership skills."

Infant and toddler programs

The competent infant deserves rich learning, not a scaled-down preschool program. Our youngest children are calling out to us to give them close nurturing relationships, amazing learning programs, and to understand and promote infant mental health.

Truly inspiring worlds for children under three years require educators and directors to step out of their comfort zones.

- Do educators understand primary caregiving methods?
- Do transitions support children's sense of security?
- What do engaging environments look like for infants and toddlers?

We can work with you to translate concepts such as attachment theory so you have practical ideas and strategies for your infant and toddler rooms.

Are you considering a big change?

Gowrie SA embarked on a long-term improvement plan when we moved from separate infant and toddler programs to combined birth to three groupings. 18 months later, families and educators embraced the quality outcomes of this project.





Snapshot of expertise:

This consultancy work has been developed in collaboration with local Elders and all our professional learning sessions are led by a specialist Aboriginal consultant. Gowrie SA has a Reconciliation Action Plan (2010-ongoing) and all our consultants undertake regular cultural training.

Creating culturally safe spaces

A child's learning and wellbeing is dependent on a safe and protective environment where educators respect and value each child's family culture. Australia has national goals to close the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-indigenous people.

Directors of services are expected to lead educators to be culturally competent as required by the EYLF.

This is complex work that cannot be taught but rather requires time and the creation of supportive learning environments. We need to encourage educators to understand their own values and attitudes, the impact of racism, to appreciate and confront their own biases and privileges and to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and child rearing.

Creating culturally safe early childhood services takes:

- Strong leadership
- Educators who learn about the cultural identities of children and families
- Trusting relationships
- Understanding and respecting different world views.

We can help you:

- Understand what your service needs to be a culturally safe place
- Unpack existing barriers and bias
- Build inclusive programs and environments

Nurturing professional conversations

'Educators continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities' (EYLF, p. 6).

The NQS requires educators to participate in critical reflection and demands that services build a professional learning community. At the heart of these requirements is shared professional dialogue. Services have repeatedly let us know that critical reflection is most often spontaneous and in response to a need, rather than as 'ongoing learning and reflective practice'.

Having tricky conversations or supporting teams to work together can require a high level of skill...

Research indicates that directors are highly influential in creating environments that support educators to participate in collaborative professional conversations. Why is this so?

Open and honest conversations can be seen as risky and will be impossible if there is not a safe and respectful environment for educators to explore their attitudes and thinking.

We can help:

Let us work with your service to support you and your team to feel safe to have robust discussions. Develop skills which create positive and trusting learning communities.

A helping hand throughout the Assessment and Rating process

The assessment and rating process is a key strategy of the NQF to improve the quality of early childhood services in Australia. It can be difficult to present the strengths of your service. You and your team are not alone in preparing for assessment, responding to assessment reports and communicating results to staff and families.


Our consultants have deep-level understanding of the NQF and can assist you to respond appropriately to these challenges.

After an initial visit and with access to your report we can advise your options in responding to the report.

We can help:

- Facilitate staff discussions to write the QIP
- Review your QIP
- Undertake a 'walk -through' or observation visit as part of preparation
- Assist educators in ways to articulate their practice
- Assist in analysing and responding to draft reports
- Offer guidance on formal review procedures



A man and a child are working together in a garden bed. The man, wearing a dark jacket and glasses, is holding a small plant seedling. The child, wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants, is also reaching towards the soil. They are both focused on the task. The background is a soft-focus view of the garden with various plants and a wooden border.

If you are ready to take your sustainability practices to the next level - let's get started...

Sustainability

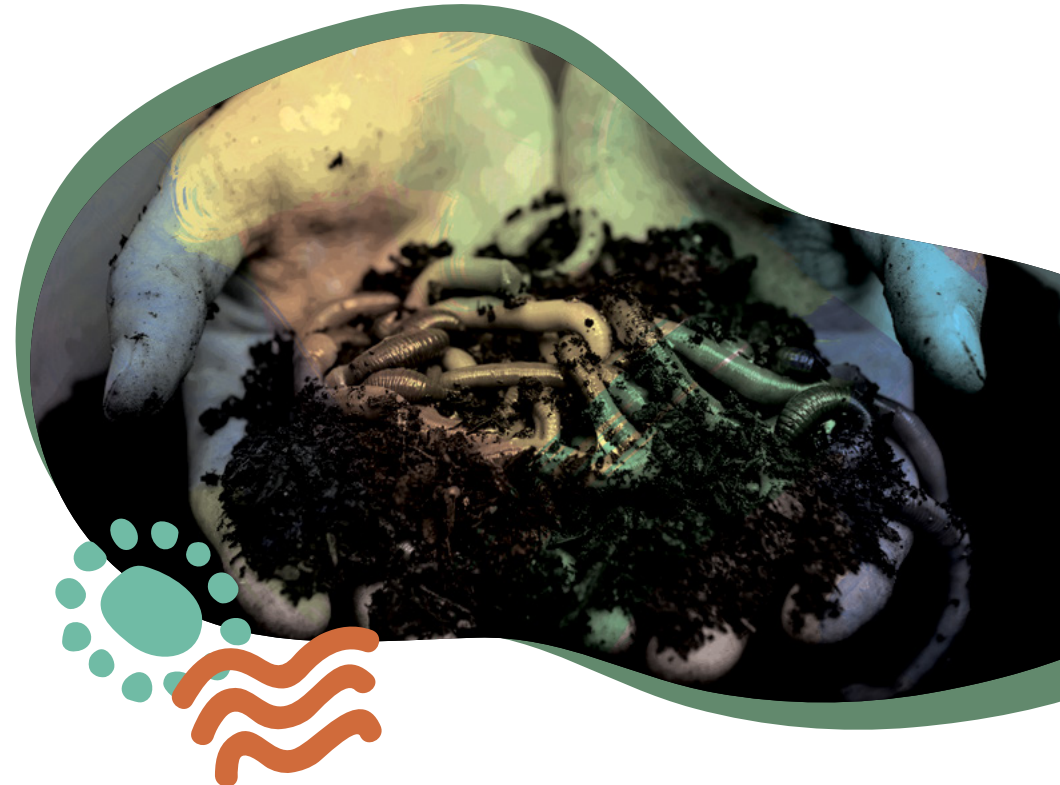
We all know we should become more sustainable, but where do we start; how far do we go; and what if we are not all on the journey together?

If we are going to lead children's learning about sustainable practice then as adults, we must lead by example.

Are you looking for innovative approaches?

We work with Nature Play SA, KESAB, Julie Davis, and services across South Australia.

We can share insights into practices of excellence and re-invigorate your service to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.



Designing, planning and implementing a project

Early childhood settings have many layers of complexities, and as a leader it can be hard to know where to begin. One way to ensure continuous improvement and bring your QIP to life is to embark on a centre wide project.

Benefits of project work:

- Incorporate QIP initiatives in a meaningful way
- Developing the learning dispositions of educators
- Increase professionalism
- Making the learning and work of educators visible
- Improve outcomes for children and families
- Embed learning into daily practice without leaving your centre
- Working toward best practice informed by research

We can help:

- Provide planning tools
- Map your project
- Link it to your QIP initiative
- Help you measure your outcomes

Ask us

...what our participation in service wide projects has looked like for us, and how we can help you design, resource, implement, monitor and evaluate a project that gives you the outcomes you seek.

Business management

Education and care services are small businesses with complex and diverse accountability and management requirements. Gowrie SA can offer you support and advice on all operational aspects so you can get back to what we are all here for – educating children. We can work with you to co-design systems that will work for you and your community.

We are solution focused and have the experience, knowledge and skills required to review existing operations to support successful business management.

We can help develop and review:

- Policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect the NQS and best practice
- Professional learning and training plans for your site needs
- Staffing plan based on need, staff structure, roles and qualifications
- Appropriate ratios through support and advice on business planning and needs analysis
- Workforce strategy from development of role descriptions, advertising strategies, selection process activities, employment contracts through to induction and supervision
- Centre administration including record keeping, budgeting, finance monitoring and variance reporting
- Systematic and fair performance management procedures to address poor performance
- Legal requirements, standards and acts

Growing a great team

Working together is at the heart of early childhood practice. It is also the foundation for creating emotionally safe environments for staff, children and families. Yet who hasn't experienced stressful situations where tensions arise in teams? How do you cut through the busy pace of work to keep communication open and consistent? Where do you begin to grow a great team if there is already conflict? How do you ensure that the team is focused on centre goals?

We can work with you to understand the current dynamics of your team and develop a plan to strengthen co-operation and collaboration between staff. We can assist you with practical strategies to nurture team culture and professionalism. If conflict is the problem we can support you to deal with the underlying issues and establish respectful ways of working among staff.

We will help you
and your team to
regain focus on
your centre goals.

Director support

Being a director of a service can be a lonely experience. This can be even tougher for new directors. Who do you talk to about challenging situations and where do you go for quick access to reliable information and knowledge?

We understand the complexity and difficulties of the role through the operation of our own children's programs and from years of working with the South Australian early childhood community. We know that strong leadership is critical for quality, your wellbeing, and success in your important role.

We are here to support you when you need it.

Our consultants have been leaders themselves with recent experience in working in early childhood services, and many have undertaken post-graduate qualifications in leadership. We draw on educational and business theories to support you to find the right solutions for your situation.

Our mentoring support can offer financial and budgeting advice, guide you in identifying service priorities, help you to unpack complex problems, support you to bring out the best in your team or provide strategies to manage changing government policies, accountability requirements or community expectations. We can work with you to build your toolkit of leadership knowledge and skills.

Relationships for wellbeing and learning

Early childhood is built on relationships. We can assist you to develop stronger relationships throughout your service. Your staff will be supported to recognise and understand children's cues and respond in ways that make each child feel safe and develop a sense of belonging.

Have you previously engaged in learning but would like to expand understandings? Ask us about Circle of Security; Marte Meo; Respect Reflect Relate (the Wellbeing, Involvement, Relationships and Active Learning Environment Scales); or combining concepts to create a tailored learning experience.

Snapshot of expertise:

We are supported by Cecilia Ebert, a qualified teacher who has studied infant mental health and social work. Cecilia has spent years working out practical ways to bring infant mental health theories into early childhood to assist educators to understand and respond to disruptive behaviours to ensure children get the best from their learning.

Planning service development

Often the demands of day-to-day operation prevent directors from developing longer term plans to make improvements, develop initiatives or introduce innovative changes.

'It is not enough to work *in* the business; you need to work on the business...'

A fundamental component of service development is nurturing honest professional conversations among staff that can help to identify areas that could benefit from centre-wide work and add the spark of excitement needed.

Our consultants can offer guidance and mentoring in creating opportunities for professional conversations that focus on service goals. We can also work with you and your team to develop longer term plans whether these are around the structure of your service or the educational programs.

Staff at Gowrie SA have many years of practical experience in developing new program approaches. We understand the value of investing in collaborative research, professional learning and problem solving which all contribute to guarantee longer term success in complex change. We can work with you to co-design a plan for your service.

Positive performance development for educator growth

Good organisational management demands that employees receive regular and timely feedback about their performance. The performance appraisal process is the foundation of staff professional growth because it identifies areas for improvement and professional learning needs. A staff appraisal process is the most common tool for performance review but these are often static and negative experiences that discourage rather than encourage people. For strong outcomes, appraisal processes must be well designed and aligned with the overall organisational development plan. They should also be collaborative and invite reflection from individual staff about their own performance. A common pitfall can be that performance development can set staff off on tangents that have little to do with overall organisational goals.

We can help:

Our consultants can assist you to design professional performance development processes that will be motivating for your staff and build their commitment to their work and the organisation. We can help Directors to work with staff to set individual professional learning goals that are linked to their service QIP and to maintain records that document individual professional learning plans as required by the NQS.

Our consultants can work with you to bring out the best in your team to build commitment, confidence and professionalism.

Professional learning and change

As a director how often do you wonder about the impact of staff professional development or why changes to programs do not stick?

We know from research that one-off professional development has limited impact if there isn't follow-up work in centre teams. How often do you have to reinvent initiatives that you thought were implemented? This can be very frustrating and a waste of valuable resources!

Change involves:

- All staff really understanding the rationale
- Participation in deeper-level professional learning
- Opportunity to practice what was learned

Our consultants can work with you to develop a service-wide professional learning plan that is linked to your QIP. We can also offer mentoring and coaching to build your capacity to be a facilitator of professional learning within your team and to understand ways to encourage staff to participate in various forms of inquiry. Practitioner inquiry is one way of achieving research-based practice, where educators can lead their own learning. It is helpful to appreciate that you don't have to get it perfect you just need to get it started and it will grow.

Programming and practice

Nationally, the biggest area of challenge for educators is still Quality Area 1 (ACECQA Snapshot). As a director, are you struggling to guide your educators' programming practices, or would you like to extend their learning? Would you like peace of mind knowing that you are meeting NQF requirements?

Our highly experienced consultants can offer you:

- Mentoring and coaching in Quality Area 1 during programming time
- An evaluation of the current strengths and challenges of the programming cycle
- Observation visits to share approaches to programming in action (at your site or at Gowrie SA)
- Professional learning sessions about the cycle of planning, meaningful documentation, including the voice of the child, individual and group documentation, evaluation and reflection, natural play spaces, or inspiring environments?
- Coaching in how to articulate the cycle of planning to assessors and families
- Guidance about emergent curriculum approaches
- We will work with you to ensure your educators have the information and support to enable them to be confident and articulate about their programming practices

Call us
on **(08) 8234 5219**

email us: train@gowriesa.org.au

Calendar sessions at your fingertips

<https://gowriesa.org.au/groups/professional-learning>

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Connect with us on social media



We regularly post about upcoming professional learning and other events on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, as well as interesting articles and links...plus it's a great way to keep in touch!

