



ECKA acknowledges Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands, water and resources of the countries that ECKA reside upon. We say thank you for sharing your connections and pay respects to their elders of the past, present and emerging. ECKA pays respect to the central place in education that Aboriginal cultural holds and says thank you.



Fidelity

Club Early Learning Centre

Information Booklet



Enriching children's lives through learning

WELCOME TO THE BALLARAT FIDELITY CLUB EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
212 RIPON STREET SOUTH, BALLARAT
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WELCOME TO THE BALLARAT FIDELITY CLUB EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Welcome to the Fidelity Kindergarten Early Learning Centre community. With your child’s attendance at our Centre, you become an important contributor in the kindergarten for 2022. This information booklet has been assembled to answer questions you may have about the kindergarten, how we operate, and how you can be involved in this very special year of your child’s early education. Throughout the coming year, if you have any questions, please feel free to discuss these with your child’s teacher. We encourage you to be involved in the kindergarten and to spend time visiting and observing your child in their learning environment.



2023 SESSION TIMES

Three-Year-Old Groups:

Red Group	Orange Group
Teacher: Shivaune Co educator: Nikkita	Teacher: Shivaune Co educator: Nikkita
Monday 9:15am – 2:15pm Tuesday 9:15am – 2:15pm	Wednesday 9:15am – 2:15pm Friday 9:15am - 2:15pm

2023 TERM DATES

- Term 1: 27th January (Staff Professional development) no kinder
 30th January – 3rd February (Set up/planning days and interviews) no kinder
 6th February Red Group children start (staggered sessions)
 9th February Orange Group children start (staggered sessions)
 13th February- 6th April, full kindergarten sessions
- Term 2: 24th April – 23rd June
- Term 3: 10th July – 15th September
- Term 4: 2nd October – 20th December



Enriching children's lives through learning

Our Preschool is proudly managed by ECKA Inc. ECKA is called the Approved Provider and is responsible for all aspects of the management of the preschool including employment of staff. Information about ECKA can be found at www.ecka.org.au and you will receive an ECKA policy and procedure booklet when you commence.

ECKA is a not-for-profit community based Early Years Management Service for kindergartens and early childhood care services in Ballarat and surrounding areas, proudly managing 28 services. While all kindergartens operate within Legislative guidelines, each kindergarten operate an individual program to meet the needs of the children and families attending their service. ECKA values the role the kindergarten in building local support networks with families, often contributing to lifelong friendships between the families and children who have shared their kinder years together.

Our Purpose

Enriching children's lives through learning.

Our Values

Respect • **Courage** • **Collaboration** • **Compassion**

Our Guiding Principle

In order to deliver on 'Our Purpose', ECKA is committed to being a sustainable organisation that maximises its impact on the lives of children.

We commit to:

- Provision of high-quality education and care services that enhance the learning and development of all children
- Advocating for children and the early education and care sector – being an influential voice for high quality early years services
- Planning and partnering for effective, sustainable and supported early years services both now and in the future.

Contact ECKA

ECKA Office

11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree VIC 3355

P: 5339 5055

E: admin@ecka.org.au

WHAT TO BRING

Each session your child will need to bring with them:

- A named backpack
- A named sunhat
- A piece of fruit (fresh or dried), raw vegetable, cheese or yogurt for morning tea
- A named drink bottle (filled with water only)
- A healthy lunch and afternoon snack, preferably in nude food containers

- In winter your child will also need a warm (named) coat for kindergarten, as we will venture outside for some fresh air and exercise (unless it is heavily raining) each day.
- A change of clothes
- Nappy/pull up and wipes if needed

INFORMATION ABOUT THE KINDERGARTEN

The Ballarat Fidelity Club ELC is situated at 212 Ripon Street South, Ballarat, and is a community project of the Ballarat Fidelity Club. The Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA) is responsible for the day to day running of the kindergarten. ECKA is an early year's manager and is responsible for the management of many Kindergartens and employment of staff.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our community

We recognise and respect the Wadawurrung peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which we learn and play. We value the knowledge, traditions and cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', which is reflected in our daily practices.

Fidelity Club Early Learning Centre celebrates years of partnerships with local families, community groups and facilities. We proudly embrace the strength and knowledge that is enriched through community engagement. As strong advocates for children having the opportunities to develop and grow to their fullest potential we work alongside and value professional support services.



Our children

We believe that the rights and safety of all children are foremost above everything else. We will passionately advocate for the children and their families who attend our service.

We believe that all children are wonderfully unique and recognise them all as active, competent and confident learners who are agents of their own learning.

Our service fosters children's sense of agency, resilience, belonging and self-worth through respectful, reciprocal, trusting relationships. We will create a safe and inviting environment that provides children with opportunities to build on all areas of their development and learning. All of the children in our program are an important part of our Fidelity Club ELC family and are given equal opportunity to grow and thrive.



Our families

At Fidelity Early Learning Centre, we value and appreciate the collaborative relationships that we build with our families. We understand the need to know that their children are safe, secure and supported in our environment and the importance of sharing their time at kinder through Storypark and in person.

We value families input into our program and support the desire for their children to develop their social and emotional skills during this year of their life. We will develop these skills through providing a program that is flexible, considers cultures and traditions, is child focused and prepares children for the next stage of their lives.

Our families have voiced the importance of the relationship between teachers at our service and their children. We agree that these relationships are of utmost importance and work together with families to build trusting, supportive, inclusive, respectful and reciprocal relationships.



Our curriculum

Our curriculum is underpinned by this philosophy created for our service and the Early Years Learning Frameworks. Our educators are guided by the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and The Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Values to ensure the rights of the children are at the forefront of our curriculum.

At Fidelity Club ELC our curriculum is play-based and provides a quality inclusive educational program that supports each child's learning and development. We provide opportunities for unhurried and open-ended exploration of materials and an environment that supports children's development and life skills, while promoting relationships and collaborative learning. Our educators use their knowledge and skills to create a planning cycle that includes observing children, listening to their ideas for learning, engaging with families and critically reflecting.

Our Educators undertake professional development and training to support and strengthen our current knowledge around a wide range of areas such as children's development, operating requirements, documenting, and evaluating children's learning and first aid, CPR, and asthma and anaphylaxis training.



Our Educators

Our Educators at Fidelity Club ELC view children as active participants in their own learning and believe all children have the right to feel safe, secure and protected. These rights underpin our practices and interactions with your children as we work to nurture their resilience, sense of belonging and self-worth. We do this through building secure attachments based on warm, trusting relationships and interactions.

Our educators believe that during the early years of their life children learn through play and building relationships with their educators, peers, and the community. We foster children's love for learning through play by providing for their varying interests and working on expanding their knowledge and skills. Through our educators taking this educational approach to early learning, children develop autonomy and self-confidence while being recognised as free, active, and autonomous people who are making connections with the world in which they live.

We pride ourselves on our reflective practice and are committed to continuous quality improvement. We believe it does 'take a village' to raise a child and value the relationships that we build each year with our families, colleagues, and the community to ensure we are providing the best learning environment for your children.



FEES

As part of the Victorian Government's *Best Start, Best Life* reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free in 2023. This means there will be no fees payable by parents. For more information on the Best Start, Best Life reform please visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/kinder>

WHAT KINDERGARTEN OFFERS YOUR CHILD

Kindergarten offers your child new experiences within a group outside the family. It provides an atmosphere that inspires exploration, discovery and learning in a play-based environment. At kindergarten children are provided with the opportunities to develop the skills to be independent while supported by staff who offer assistance, guidance, support and encouragement.

Each child is given the opportunity to creatively express his/her feelings and ideas, is learning to play with others, is encouraged to be a confident and involved learner and an effective communicator.

This Kindergarten follows a play-based curriculum planned from observations of each individual's needs and interests, as well as many intentional learning experiences.

A detail of each group's curriculum is displayed in the room and via Storypark.



ENROLMENT-

Enrolment applications will be accepted at the City of Ballarat from the 1st of January the year your child turns two. To be eligible to attend Fidelity ELC, children must have turned 3 years of age on or before the 30th April in the year they attend. Offers of places are given through the City of Ballarat in August of the year prior to your child beginning at kindergarten.

CLOTHING

We will do our best to protect children's clothing – they will wear smocks when they paint and engage in other 'messy' activities. However, it is preferable children do not have to worry about keeping clean – this allows them the freedom to fully enjoy the learning experience. So please send your child in clothes that are easily laundered and that he/she can manage on his/her own. Tracksuit pants are ideal for children to wear to kindergarten. Please send your child to kindergarten in sensible shoes that allow him/her to run, jump and climb. Thongs and 'Crocs' are not suitable footwear for kindergarten. A change of clothes will be needed encase of accidents or messy play. Please send a named hat with your child each day. In winter we venture outside every day, unless it is raining, your child will need a suitable coat and hat in the colder months.



KINDERGARTEN POLICIES

Policies ensure the efficient and effective operation of our kindergarten and ensure quality care and conditions for staff, parents and most importantly our children. Policies are frequently revised and new ones adopted by ECKA as the need arises. A copy of the policies may be found at the kindergarten and or on the ECKA website [Policies - Eureka Community Kindergarten Association \(ecka.org.au\)](http://ecka.org.au).

All of the policies are in line with the National Quality Standard.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To comply with the National Quality Standard, all parents leaving their children at kindergarten must sign the daily attendance book and again, when departing. The attendance book must be signed by the person collecting your child.

Staff must be notified if someone else is to pick up your child. That person's name must be included on your enrolment form as a person authorised to collect your child from kindergarten. Additional people can be added to this if the need arises.

We like to greet you both on arrival, so please come in, settle your child and say 'goodbye' to them before leaving. When the session is over children will be dismissed from our mat area one at a time as their parent comes to the kinder door. This ensures children are dispersed safely and in a calm environment for children who are tired or overwhelmed in load busy environments. If you would like to talk with staff at the end of session, we are more than happy to invite you in once children have all departed with their families. If you are going to be late, please call us so that we may reassure your child. Whilst we have an open-door policy and all family members are welcome at kindergarten, we request that at collection time, parents, siblings and carers wait quietly outside until the children are dismissed and the door is opened.

(This will depend on any restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and guidelines we receive from the Department of Education and Training).

Please keep in mind that staff are not responsible for children before or after the session.

A late pick-up fee of \$5.00 for every 15 minutes late will apply if staff have not been notified.

FRUIT SNACK

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic began, we have changed from sharing communal fruit platters to each child bringing their own piece of fruit to kindergarten for morning tea.

Each child is required to bring a piece of fruit (fresh or dried), a raw vegetable (such as carrot, celery, etc.) to kindergarten each day. The children are also required to bring along a named drink bottle. Please provide **water** from home.



KINDERGARTEN GROUPS – LUNCH

The children will need to bring lunch to kindergarten each day. Please provide them with a healthy lunch, such as a sandwich, fruit and a small snack. Our kindergarten is a member of Smiles 4 Miles program, encouraging *healthy* eating for children (please do not send lollies, chips, etc). We are also promoting an environmentally sustainable setting and we suggest the use of reusable containers rather than food wrappers. We aim to be a ‘nude food’ kindergarten.



Due to increased incidence of allergies/severe allergies, please note we are also a nut free zone.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Each year we are asked by families how they can help support the kindergarten and contribute to both our community and the educational programs we provide to the children.

There are many different ways that families may contribute in and out of kindergarten sessions. Some of the activities in the kindergarten session may include; attending an excursion, helping the children plant in our vegetable garden, cutting up the shared fruit platter or coming in to read a story, or out of session by supporting social events and providing your feedback and ideas.

If you are interested in volunteering some time to help, please speak directly with the educators or message us via the Storypark app. We understand that people have busy lives and lots of commitments and if you are not able to indicate support right now, we completely understand, however if your circumstances change, please feel free to speak with educators as we will be happy for your help.

Please note that our parent volunteers do not need a working with children’s check provided that the volunteering is in the group with your own child. Staff will fully supervise all volunteers in accordance with our volunteer and visitor policies.

EXCURSIONS AND ENTERTAINERS

In order to enrich the children’s experiences in the community, we have excursions and incursions throughout the year. These may include going on an excursions in our local community, visiting food is free, going next door to meet the kindergarten children or playing on the oval behind kinder.

Parent permission forms must be signed before a child can be taken on any excursion outside the kindergarten. These forms and details of forthcoming excursions will be sent home prior to the event.

BIRTHDAYS

We love birthdays at kindergarten and celebrate by lighting a candle and singing birthday songs. Parents are welcome to supply a ***shop bought*** cake (small cupcakes are ideal, please no cream) to celebrate their child's birthday with their kindergarten group. We ask that you purchase a cake with the ingredients listed on the wrapping (e.g. Safeway or Coles). This helps when we have a child who has an allergy or food restrictions.



Parents of children with allergies may like to leave something 'special' at kindergarten for their child on days that we have birthday cake. Please see staff if you have any queries.

NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES

We will upload newsletters and other important information on Storypark.

HEALTH AND ABSENCE

Please do not bring your child to kindergarten if they are unwell. Kindergarten is a fabulous and fun place to be, but if your child is unwell or overtired the stimulation and challenges of kindergarten environment can be very difficult to cope with.

In fairness to other children and their families, keep your child at home for 24 hours after diarrhoea/vomiting ceases. **Your child's current immunisation status/details are by law, required to be provided to the kindergarten and are kept with the confidential emergency details on file.**

Parents need to be aware that non-immunised children will not be able to attend kindergarten, unless they qualify for the "grace period" as determined by the Health Department guidelines. Please phone or email the kindergarten and let staff know if your child or a member of your family has an infectious disease, so that they may tell you how long the regulations state he/she must be excluded from kindergarten. If your child is going to be away for more than a few days (if you are going on holidays etc.) please notify your teacher.

Any child who suffers from a medical condition such as Asthma / Anaphylaxis / Severe Allergy etc., will need to provide information provided by their doctor and complete a risk management and a communication plan with their child's teacher. A child at medical risk cannot attend Kindergarten until these forms have been completed and any medication that may be required have been given to the Service.

MEDICATION

Medication Book – All medications to be administered at the kindergarten must be recorded in the medication book. These medications must be in their original container, complete with original label, instructions and expiry date.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

These procedures are displayed throughout the Centre. During the year we will practice emergency evacuation and containment procedures with the children in each group, at least once each term throughout the year.

FIRST AID

Each staff member is trained in First Aid, Asthma Management and Anaphylaxis.

WASTE MATERIALS

Kindergarten is a great place to see recycling at its best! So please remember us when sorting through for recycling. The sort of waste materials that we can use include – boxes – all shapes and sizes, fabric, wool, cotton reels, bottle tops, buttons, beads, cards, containers and cylinders, paper and foil etc. These items will be used as your child creates and explores their learning environment.

Soft wood off-cuts for carpentry are also much appreciated. We *cannot* use medicine bottles, toilet rolls, match boxes, egg cartons, milk cartons or anything soiled or damaged.



STORYPARK

As part of the ECKA community, we use a program called Storypark to communicate with families. Storypark is a free online platform.

We use Storypark to access and document individual children’s learning and development, which we share with individual families. This will include individual and group learning stories and individual child notes.

We also plan and document our learning environment, post community announcements, newsletters, and snapshots of our learning environment.

Storypark is a private platform for each child’s family and is not to be shared on other social platforms.



Communication

Communication between the staff and families is of the utmost importance in achieving the best learning outcomes for each child. If you would like information on your child’s progress do not hesitate to speak with your teacher, informally through email or Storypark, or make an appointment at a convenient time, for updates on your child’s progress or if a problem should arise. To send a personal message to educators via Storypark click on the + icon in the top right hand corner, choose conversation and then the teachers name from the drop box.



“A sense of security and sound wellbeing gives children the confidence to experiment and explore and to try out new ideas, thus developing their competence and becoming active and involved participants in learning. Children are more likely to be confident and involved learners when their family and community experiences and understandings are recognised and included in the early childhood setting. This assists them to make connections and to make sense of new experiences.”

(Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia)

We hope your association with the Ballarat Fidelity ELC Kindergarten will be a happy and positive experience. We look forward to meeting and working with you and your child and thank you for allowing us the opportunity of sharing in this magical year of early learning with your child.