



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.



Information Booklet



Enriching children's lives through learning

WELCOME TO THE BALLARAT FIDELITY CLUB KINDERGARTEN INC.
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WELCOME TO THE BALLARAT FIDELITY CLUB KINDERGARTEN

Please take the time to read through this information booklet. If you have any questions, through-out the year, 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

Blue Group	Green Group	Yellow Group
Teacher : Sharee Co-educators: Mary and Fiona	Teacher : Sharee Co-educators: Mary and Fiona	Teachers: Sharee Co-educators: Fiona and Mary
Monday 9.00am - 2.00pm	Tuesday 9.00am - 2.00pm	Monday 8:30am – 4:00pm
Wednesday 9.00am - 2.00pm	Wednesday 9.00am - 2.00pm	Tuesday 8:30am – 4:00pm
Thursday 9.00am - 2.00pm	Thursday 9.00am - 2.00pm	

Our kindergarten sessions have been set in response to the requirements of our families. It is important that you are aware of your child’s session times as on Monday and Tuesdays there will be different start and finishing times, depending on if you have chosen a 5 hr (3 days) or 7.5 hr (2 days) session.

What does this mean? If your child is in either Blue or Green group there will already be children in attendance when you arrive in the morning but unfortunately we can-not permit the Blue (Mondays) or Green (Tuesdays) children entry into the kinder until our third staff member begins at 9am. This is a legal requirement and is due to our staff/child ratios, when there are two groups in attendance, we will have our three staff members working with the group. At 9am the later start families will be welcomed in the foyer. At 2pm it is also important that the children in the shorter sessions are collected on time to again adhere to child/staff ratios.

2023 TERM DATES

Term 1:	27 th January 30 th January – 3 rd February 6 th February	Staff professional development. Set up/planning and interview days. Children begin kindergarten sessions. (Staggered sessions apply the first week)
Term 2:	24 th April – 23 rd June	
Term 3:	10 th July – 15 th September	
Term 4:	2 nd October – 20 th 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:

- A named backpack.
- A named sunhat (from September 1st through to 30th April).
- A piece of fruit (fresh or dried) or a raw vegetable for morning tea.
- A named drink bottle (filled with water only).
- A healthy lunch, preferably in nude food containers.
- A small, healthy snack for afternoon tea (Yellow group)
- In winter your child will also need a warm (named) coat.
- A change of clothes.

Our community

The Fidelity Club Kindergarten celebrates years of partnerships with local families, community groups and facilities.

Our Kindergarten is continually establishing and maintaining relationships within our wider community to enhance the learning and development of all children. We proudly embrace the strength and knowledge that is enriched through community engagement and take an active role in caring for our environment. We discuss and apply many practices in our everyday learning that help to contribute to sustainable living. As strong advocates for children, having the opportunities to develop and grow to their fullest potential, we work alongside and value professional support services.

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



“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)

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our children

We acknowledge that all children are unique and come from diverse backgrounds and the wellbeing of all children is paramount to the education and care provided at our kindergarten. Our service fosters children's sense of agency, resilience, belonging and self-worth through respectful, trusting relationships. We provide a safe and inviting environment that provides children with opportunities to build on all areas of their development and learning. We foster children's love for learning by providing for their varying interests, expanding their knowledge and skills, and acknowledge that children learn best when they are empowered to have a voice in their learning environment.

Children come to us with their own personal strengths, and needs, and we will strive to assist each child to develop fundamental skills, in a fun, play based environment.

We understand that good self-esteem is essential to a child's wellbeing and want their positive association with learning to extend well beyond their kinder year.



Our Families

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 utilise Storypark, as well as conversations in person, to share each child's experience.

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.

Relationships are seen as the utmost importance. We work together with children and their families to build trusting, supportive, inclusive, respectful and reciprocal relationships. We will passionately advocate for the children and their families who attend our service.



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.

Our curriculum includes a combination of child-directed play-based and intentional teaching moments. We provide a quality inclusive educational program that supports each child's learning and development. We value the importance of opportunities for unhurried and open-ended exploration of materials and an environment that supports children's development and life skills, while promoting collaborative learning. Our educators use their knowledge and skills to create a planning cycle that includes observing children, listening to their ideas, engaging with families and critically reflecting.

To support your child's development we embrace Vygotsky's theory of proximal development. Vygotsky recognized that a certain amount of learning happens automatically as children mature, but he also believed that in order to advance their learning even further, children must engage in social interaction with "more knowledgeable others." Every child will be supported to problem solve, question, explore and develop at their own pace with educators planning activities that allow them to face small challenges to take the next step in their development.

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 the children.

The zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by a child's independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.



Our Educators

Our educators 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 believe that during the early years of their life children learn through play and it is essential that they build relationships with their educators, peers, and the community. In our care children develop autonomy, self-confidence and are recognised as free, active, and autonomous people who are making connections with the world in which they live. We value the need for fundamental skill development, to assist each student to have a smooth transition to school.

We pride ourselves on our reflective practice and are committed to continuous quality improvement. You child's 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.



FEES AND FUNDING

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

The Kindergarten offers your child new experiences within a group outside the family. It provides an atmosphere where he/she is free to explore and find out for him/herself. In this setting he/she is able to become independent while the staff are there to 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 the curriculum is displayed in the foyer.



ENROLMENT

Enrolment applications for 3 & 4yo Kindergarten will be accepted at the City of Ballarat from the 1st of January the year your child turns two. Offers of places are given through the City of Ballarat in August of the year prior to your child beginning at Kindergarten.

“We have to look after the worms. We give them fruit, but not oranges. We don’t give them meat.” - Luka

CLOTHING

We will do our best to protect children's clothing, however, it is preferable children do not have to worry about keeping clean – this allows them the freedom to fully enjoy the learning experience. 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. From the beginning of September through to the end of April, a sunhat is essential for outside. 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. Our policy handbook is accessible to all parents. The policies are frequently revised and new ones adopted by ECKA as the need arises. A copy of the policies may be found on the ECKA website. 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. 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.

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 in the foyer until the children are dismissed.

FRUIT DUTY

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.

A fruit duty roster will be available on Storypark and parents are encouraged to choose a day that suits them to come in and help with morning tea time. Fruit duty is a great opportunity to come along and participate in your child's Kindergarten experience. You will have the chance to see your child at play, and watch the developing relationships they have with their peers. It is also a good opportunity to get to know the staff. Children enjoy having a parent participate and we also appreciate your assistance.



KINDERGARTEN GROUPS – LUNCH and AFTERNOON TEA

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. We are encouraging *healthy* eating at our Kindergarten, so 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.

Yellow group children will also need to bring a healthy snack for afternoon tea.

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

“We sing songs, we read stories, we dance and we talk.” - Tia

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. Parent permission forms must be signed before a child can be taken on any excursion outside the kindergarten (apart from the general form that allows us to visit the food is free area and oval). These forms and details of forthcoming excursions will be sent home prior to the event.

“We love playing outside!” - Max

BIRTHDAYS

We love birthdays at Kindergarten and celebrate by lighting candles and singing birthday songs. Parents are welcome to supply a plain **shop bought** cake (small cupcakes are ideal) 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 a treat at kindergarten for their child on days that we have birthday cake. Please see staff if you have any queries.



PARENT LIBRARY

A collection of books which may be of interest to you is available for borrowing. These books are on display in the kindergarten foyer. Please write your name and the title of the book you are borrowing in the book provided and mark it off when you return it.

STORYPARK, NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES

Storypark is our main way of sharing information with families. Keep an eye on your child's Storypark for individual observations and goals, group activities, newsletters, special days and it is also a way that families can share their family activity with the kindergarten. If you need to speak with staff urgently it is always best to call (0353326520) but for any non-urgent matters you are welcome to create a private message.

Storypark is a private platform for each child's family and is not to be shared on other social platforms. Individual observations can only be seen by the teachers and families, including any comments. Multiple children and group observations can be accessed by any child's family who is included. The children love to hear comments from families about what they have been doing at kindergarten, so feel free to add any positive comments or tap the heart icon.



“We do drawings, blocks and play with the birds.” - Luka

HEALTH AND ABSENCE

Please do not bring your child to Kindergarten if he/she is 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 48 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 be excluded from Kindergarten, unless they qualify for the "grace period" as determined by the Health Department guidelines.

Please phone 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 (i.e. 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

The First aid cabinet is located on the wall above the children's lockers in the bathroom. 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.

KINDERGARTEN LIBRARY

At the beginning of Term 2 we will commence the lending library in the Kindergarten groups. Each child will make a library bag at Kindergarten. One book at a time may be borrowed on your child's Library Day. (Yellow group Tuesday's, Blue and Green Group Thursday's) If a book is lost or damaged it should be replaced.

An enjoyment of reading and books is greatly encouraged. Books help children to develop so many new skills, such as communication and broadening their understanding of the world.



“If someone doesn't know how to do a puzzle, you could help them. We could play together and do a drawing.” - Freddie

TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS

In 2009 the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development introduced a Transition Learning and Development Statement as a way to share information between families, Kindergartens and the School your child will be attending. This statement will be prepared during Term 4, ready to be passed on to your child's school later in the term.

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, or make an appointment at a convenient time, for updates on your child's progress or if a problem should arise. We also offer parent teacher interviews midyear.

We hope your association with the Ballarat Fidelity Club 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.