



Information Booklet 2023



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Enriching children's lives through learning

Welcome to Clunes & District Pre-School



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

This information has been put together to answer some frequently asked questions on how the Pre-School operates and how you can be involved.

Staff for 2023

Charissa Dubbeld: Early Childhood Teacher and Service Leader

Lee Swanson: Early Childhood Educator

Kinder Times and Groups

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9.00am-2.00pm	9.00am-2.00pm	9.00am-2.00pm	9.00am-2.00pm
Red	Red	Blue	Red
Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue
Green	Green	Green	Yellow

Group	Colour
Red (Wallaby)	Red
Blue (Wallaby)	Blue
Yellow (Wallaby)	Yellow
Green (Possum)	Green

Term Dates for 2023

Term 1 27th January (teachers) – 6th April

Term 2 24th April – 23rd June

Term 3 10th July – 15th September

Term 4 2nd October – 20th December

Dates to Remember

Interview Days: *Wednesday 1st to Friday 4th February*

Children's first Day: *Monday 7th February Groups Red, Yellow, Green.*

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

At Clunes and District Kindergarten we believe that children are strong and capable individuals who learn through interacting with their environment and through relationships with others. As part of ECKA, our values are respect, compassion, courage and collaboration and aim to embed these into our professional practice every day.

When interacting with children, families, the wider community and each other, we strive to:

Be Respectful

We work and play on Dja Dja Wurrung land and pay respect to the past, present and future Elders of this nation. We endeavour to embed the cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into our curriculum.

We are committed to providing a positive learning environment built on kindness and respect. This is the basis of our program, promoting respect for each other, the environment and our community.

We are underpinned by The National Quality Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and our curriculum is play based supported by intentional teaching moments.

Be Compassionate

We embrace diversity and difference and understand that children develop at their own pace.

We believe that each child is a unique and valued member of our Kinder community.

We advocate for the safety and wellbeing of children and recognise this as crucial for all learning and development.

Be Courageous

We believe that all children are competent and capable learners.

Each child develops independence, self-identity and an ability to safely question the world around them at their own pace. This is possible in our open ended, play based learning environment. Children are therefore encouraged to take risks in their learning, to be themselves and to develop a can-do attitude.

We see taking risks as an important part of the learning process.

We recognise the courage and trust families place in us as we support children to become global citizens on their education path.

We acknowledge that the health and wellbeing of each child is crucial. Child Safe Standards guide our practice and we strive to advocate for all children.

We are courageous in our critical reflection. It informs our practice and we continually draw on evidence-based research, theories and perspectives to challenge our understandings.

Be Collaborative

We recognise families as children's first and most influential teachers

Our School Readiness Funding connects us with Allied Health professionals, enabling opportunities to engage in professional learning by aligning with external stakeholders and actively reflecting upon our practice to achieve best outcomes for all children.

We are linked in with community groups including the Primary School, Smiles for Miles and community health.

We engage with external providers to support children and families, ensuring continuity of care is achieved across an individual's learning environment.

We prioritise respectful relationships with children, families, colleagues and communities. This is achieved through active listening, positive interactions and seeking clarification when required.

At Clunes and District Pre-School, we see that best outcomes are achieved for our Kinder community when we work together towards a common goal.

Program overview

Our program is informed by both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, along with the National Quality Framework and Child Safe Standards. You will see references to these frameworks in our program, documentation and our planning wall. Staff will happily discuss and provide information about any aspect of the frameworks and your child's learning journey.



Assessment and Rating overview

The National Quality Framework was introduced in 2012 to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children accessing early childhood services. The National Quality Standard (NQS) outlines 7 Quality areas

- Educational Program and Practice
- Children's Health and Safety
- Physical Environment
- Staffing Arrangements
- Relationships with Children
- Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Leadership and Service Management

As part of this framework, kindergartens are now being assessed and the quality of the service rated against these standards.

This kindergarten had an assessment and rating visit in 2018
This service is rated overall at **Exceeding** National Quality Standards



Admission & Enrolment Procedures

Children must be 3 years old by the 30th April in their Pre-School year to be eligible for a government funded place at Kinder. The children are offered positions at the Pre-School according to their order of enrolment. **Children must be three years old before they can begin their Kinder journey.**

Interview Days

Interview Days will be held on Wednesday 1st, Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd February 2023. We will let you know your interview time. This is to have a chat and go through your enrolment forms.

The A to Z of Frequently Asked Questions:

Arrival and departure

Signing in and out

The Attendance Book is essential to knowing which children are in the centre at any one time. All children must be signed in and out with the exact time of arrival and departure recorded by the person who delivers and collects the child. In the event of a parent/guardian running late, staff must be informed by the parents/guardian of any changes to arrangements.

Arrival

If you are unwell, please do not attend the kindergarten.

Please encourage your child to place their bag in the appropriate place themselves. If your child has not been to Kinder before, it is wise to allow a little extra time in the morning to settle your child in the kinder environment, especially at the beginning of the year. Please ensure all doors and gates are securely closed upon entry.

Departure

Collection of a child must be by a person who has lawful authority to do so and is authorised on the enrolment form. If anyone other than the parent/guardian or those authorised are collecting a child, prior authorisation must be provided. Authorisations can be amended throughout the year by parents / guardians. Please speak to staff to add or remove authorised persons on your child's enrolment record.

Attendance Information

All absences are recorded by staff in both the Sign in book and an online portal. Please let staff know if your child will be away by either a phone call (feel free to leave a message after hours), email or StoryPark notification. It is in the children's best interest that they participate in the full Kinder session and arriving on time helps reduce any further disruptions to the

children's learning. If an emergency arises and you are going to be late collecting your child, please contact us so that your child can be reassured.

Accidents

The safety and welfare of the children is our first priority.

Minor accidents (grazes, bumps, small cuts and scratches) will be treated at the preschool and recorded in the accident record. Please see Staff to sight and sign the accident record.

For accidents requiring medical attention, the parent or emergency contact will be called immediately.

In cases of extreme emergency, the ambulance will be called first, and parent/guardian notified as soon as possible.

All medical details, including ambulance cover should be documented on the enrolment form.

Please note that an ambulance will always be called in a medical emergency.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays at Kinder! Please inform Charissa or Lee if you would like to provide birthday cup cakes (ensure an ingredients list is attached). Under current COVID restrictions, we request these are store bought.

Closure days

Clunes & District Preschool has been included in the DET Category 4 list as at risk to grassfire and will therefore be closed on all Catastrophic fire danger rating Days declared for the Central Fire Ban District. We are closed for all Victorian school and public holidays. Throughout the year, we will also have 2 closure days for staff professional development. We endeavour to give as much prior notice of these as possible, via StoryPark and the noticeboard out the front of Kinder.

Clothing

We encourage and assist children to manage their clothes in hot weather, cold weather and when going to the toilet. By letting the children wear clothing that is easy to manage and easily laundered you are supporting them to develop confidence and independence. Please provide a bag that is easy to open and close along with a change of clothes. Kinder can be messy! **Please name every item.**

For the safety of the children we ask that thongs, crocs and slip on shoes not to be worn at the kindergarten, as they can be dangerous when the children are running or climbing.

Clunes and District Preschool is an accredited 'Sun Smart' kindergarten; therefore, children are required to wear either a broad-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat from September to April or when the UV level is above 3, with a winter hat during the cooler months.

In summer, appropriate clothing that covers shoulders and hats are required. Children have hat hooks and are requested to provide a wide brimmed hat that can be left at Kinder. Sunscreen should be applied prior to attending the kindergarten and left in the children's bags in case reapplication is required. Kindergarten do have a bottle of shared Sunscreen, however if your child is allergic, please supply your own.

In winter, we still go outside to exercise and get fresh air so it is important to send a warm coat, hat and gumboots for outside play. A pair of slippers to prevent the carpets from getting muddy are also helpful.



Complaints / Compliments / Suggestions

We encourage you to speak to either Charissa or Lee if you have any concerns at Kinder. We understand that maintaining confidentiality can be difficult with the current gate drop off and pick up procedure. Meetings can be scheduled after a Kinder session, please send us an email, a StoryPark message or give us a call to arrange a meeting. Complaints, compliments and suggestions can also be advised in writing to ECKA CEO. 11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree 3355 or by calling the ECKA office on 53395055.

Excursions & Incursions

These are an important part of the Pre-School program. Incursions and excursions expose children to many different experiences, further extending their development and learning. Parents will be notified of forthcoming excursions approved by ECKA.

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>

Infectious Disease

Parents must contact the Pre-School if their child contracts an infectious disease. Examples include but are not limited to measles, chicken pox, mumps or head lice. Once an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the child cannot attend Kinder until Children Services guidelines have been met. Children are to be kept home from Kinder while their condition is contagious. Please let us know if children are unable to attend a session. This can be a phone call, email or StoryPark message.

Morning Snack and Lunches

It is expected that children eat fruit at snack time.

The food that children bring to Kinder should be nutritious to sustain their energy levels through our busy days. We promote healthy eating habits for optimum health and wellbeing. Food should be packed in a lunch box that is easy for your child to handle and clearly named. The Kinder promotes water as the healthy drink option. Please provide a named drink bottle for your child.

Please do not send chocolates, chocolate biscuits, chips, lollies etc. Also, NO NUTS, NUTELLA OR PEANUT BUTTER PLEASE.

No smoking

Smoking is prohibited on kindergarten grounds and within 4 metres of the kindergarten entrance.



Notice Board & StoryPark

Please regularly check StoryPark notifications and the White Board at the entrance of Kinder for notices and newsletters. This will ensure your family is up to date with what is happening in the Kinder community.

Family 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.



Photographs/Videos and Social Media

Please respect the rights of other children and families by checking with the Teacher in Charge before taking any photographs or videos of children. You will be required to sign a photographic permission form as part of your enrolment process to allow the preschool to use images of your child. Some parents may request that their child not be photographed. Families have a right to privacy. We ask parents to be mindful of maintaining confidentiality when dealing with social media. **It is not appropriate for parents to place photos or comments that include children other than their own on to any social media or websites**

Policies

A copy of the Pre-School Policy Book is available for you to view in the foyer. This book contains policies that are relevant to the running of the Pre-School. These are also available of the ECKA website.

Portfolios & Documentation

A snapshot of your child's learning and group experiences will be available in individual portfolios in the Kinder and via StoryPark. Please feel free to access these during the Kinder year. Charissa and Lee are available to discuss and celebrate your child's learning any time.

We will keep a record of your child's personal development throughout the year. Please speak to staff to arrange a time if you wish to view and discuss these. In preparation for school, a Transition Report will be sent home to each family towards the end of their final Kinder year. The Transition Report details your child's strengths and competencies and is a learning document that will assist your child's transition into their first year of primary school.



Routine

We have a flexible daily routine that integrates the indoor and outdoor learning environments, music and movement, intentional teaching and ample time for unrushed play.



Safety

We take every precaution to protect all children at the preschool from any hazard likely to cause injury. We have developed an evacuation procedure and an emergency drill will be practiced by the children and teachers each term. Evacuation plans are on display at the Pre-School. Kinder will be closed on Catastrophic fire rating days.

Sickness

Your child will enjoy and benefit from their Pre-School day only if well. **In the interest of all children if your child seems unwell, please keep them home.** If a child becomes unwell and is unable to participate in the Kinder program, the parent/emergency contact will be called.

Toys

Where possible, we discourage children from bringing toys to kindergarten. We understand that some children might have a comfort toy that they like to keep in their bag or occasionally carry when upset however we cannot be responsible for toys from home that become broken or lost. Please discuss this with the teacher.

We do encourage children to bring nature items, or other items of interest to discuss with the other children.

Visitors sign in

Please sign the Visitors Register if you are entering the Kinder. This is situated in the foyer. Visitor registers allows staff to quickly check who is in the building in the case of an emergency.



Notes: