



# Family Information Booklet 2025

Enriching children's  
lives through learning

[ecka.org.au](http://ecka.org.au)  

A member of





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



### Indigenous Preschool Advancement Strategy (IPAS) Artwork “Cared for”

*Painting created by Albert Fagan, Wadawurrung Traditional Owner*

#### Painting description:

The lines within the painting represent the individual journey the children and teachers have taken to get here today. In the middle of the painting is a camp fire where the teachers provide food and water for the children. The symbols on either side represent the teachers and the learning that occurs with the children

## WELCOME TO BLACK HILL KINDERGARTEN

This information booklet has been compiled so you may have a better understanding of your Kindergarten - the how's and why's of its operation. We hope your association with the kindergarten will be a happy and rewarding one. You will soon become aware that your Kindergarten is not just a centre that your child attends, but more so a unique combination of interested staff and families, all working together with the common goal of producing happy, confident and well-adjusted children.

This centre is bound by the Education and Care National Law 2010 (National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012, (National Regulation) and the National Quality Standard (NQS) and is responsible to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Our Kindergarten premises are leased from the City of Ballarat.



**Enriching children's lives through learning**

Our Kindergarten 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](http://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 29 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.

## CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

ECKA's purpose, Enriching children's lives through learning, can only be achieved where children are in education and care environments that are safe, welcoming and inclusive for children and their families; and ensure that children's health safety and wellbeing is protected at all times. Importantly, children must not only be safe but also feel safe. The welfare of children in ECKA services is at all times our priority and ECKA has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

ECKA operates under a range of legislative, policy and procedural requirements that prioritise the safety of children as paramount at all times, and these are available on the ECKA website, ECKA office, and ECKA Services

ECKA encourages all children, families, employees and others involved with ECKA services to participate in regular evaluation and review of policies and practices, or at any time provide feedback, anonymously if desired, via the ECKA website, ECKA office or ECKA service. At all times, any complaints or concerns about child safety will be treated with the highest priority.

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

#### ECKA:

- is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
  - promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
  - promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - promoting the safety of children with a disability
  - promoting the safety of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC settings
  - Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included
- values, respects and cares for children
- empowers children's voices by fostering opportunities for each child to participate, express their views, and to learn and develop
- always acts in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of child abuse
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development
- actively manages the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
- continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse.
- proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children, consistent with their best interests

## CONTACT INFORMATION



602 Sherrard Street, Black Hill VIC 3350

(03) 5332 7849 / 0428 901 349

[black.hill.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au](mailto:black.hill.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au)

[ecka.org.au](http://ecka.org.au)



11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree VIC 3355

(03) 5339 5055

[info@ecka.org.au](mailto:info@ecka.org.au)

[ecka.org.au](http://ecka.org.au)

## TERM DATES FOR 2025

2025	Start Date	Finish Date	Public Holidays
Term 1	3 February *	4 April	Labour day 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Term 2	22 April	4 July	ANZAC Day 25 <sup>th</sup> April Kings Birthday 9 <sup>th</sup> June
Term 3	21 July	19 September	
Term 4	6 October	18 December	Melbourne Cup 4 <sup>th</sup> November

\* Children commence after the meet and greet interview in early February. Start times can vary so please check Storypark for details on your child's starting date and times.

## SESSION TIMES FOR 2025

### 1st Year Groups (3yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Bilbies				8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00

### 2nd Year Groups (4yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wombat	8:30 – 4:00		8:30 – 4:00		
Koala	8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00			
Kangaroo		8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00		



## OUR PHILOSOPHY

We aim to provide a warm, safe, secure, and nurturing environment. We strive to build trusting relationships with all children, to enhance each child's sense of belonging and wellbeing, which in turn supports each child's holistic development. We will ensure each child feels love, security, and a sense of belonging, and will scaffold the development of each child as an individual who can grow their separate identity and qualities while still contributing within a large group of peers.

We believe each child is a unique individual with their own needs, interests, abilities, and backgrounds. The kindergarten will work alongside families to provide a stimulating and educational curriculum and quality care. We value partnerships with families and strive to create a welcoming environment for children, parents, and the wider community. We also believe that when there is a collaborative, respectful partnership between all parties then everyone benefits. We value parent feedback and suggestions with sharing of ideas, skills, and family input forms.

A homelike environment is a base for the children's experiences, and we believe at Black Hill Kindergarten our environment should reflect a sense of consistency between home, the wider community, and the Centre. We believe it is important to provide a self-directed play-based curriculum, which intrinsically motivates children to explore and discover their environment. We strive to achieve an appropriate balance between children's choice and teacher directed learning whilst keeping a flexible attitude to cater to children's individual and daily needs. We believe all children are active learners, creating and building knowledge, learning, self-image, confidence, and independence through their daily experiences and by nurturing in each child a positive understanding of themselves, sense of responsibility, self-discipline and self-esteem. We believe the curriculum should be co-constructed and supported by educators from children's emerging ideas, family input and community issues.

Children will have the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace and develop a respect for others in a tolerant, anti-bias and non-sexist environment. We recognise children as "active citizens" from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. We value the wider community such as Black Hill Primary School, family support agencies, Pineview Residential Care, Pinarc, the Wathaurong People and other early childhood organisations. These values drive us to holistically embed a respectful and culturally sensitive perspective that is reflected both in our practices and in the curriculum. An emphasis on incorporating materials from other cultures into the daily lives of the children will be done in a natural and authentic manner. We recognise that when diversity and multiculturalism is only experienced only on special occasions it defeats the holistic perspective by making them novel or a bit odd because they are unusual. Using the objects, stories, and resources we have in such an improvised way, we hope will greatly expand opportunities for children to absorb and accept diversity as a part of day-to-day living.

Our Kindergarten uses the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework to guide our programming and planning for children's learning. We incorporate the documents' values and outcomes into our service programs to ensure all children are working towards the same overall outcomes to learning during their time at our service. Moreover, the document encourages staff and families to work in partnership in order to achieve learning outcomes for children, with this reflected our beliefs, as we value home learning and experiences as important and strive to extend home learning in our kindergarten environment. On par with the framework, is our belief in teaching and advocating for sustainability.

At Black Hill Kindergarten we are committed to sustainability, working collaboratively with children, their families, and the wider community to support our goals. We are dedicated to improving the local environment in our community by fostering partnerships within the area, and to create a cleaner neighbourhood by participating in local and state programs such as 'Clean up Australia Day'. We believe that by actively engaging children early on in discussions and hands-on experiences, they develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of sustainable living. Therefore, we will consistently develop a thriving vegetable garden, with the overflow of herbs and vegetables being donated to families, implement 'kinder helping hands' where children are selected to be responsible for recycling, composting, worm farming, garden maintenance and energy saving (turning off unnecessary lights and power, opening blinds),

and use the by-products of our working compost bin and worm farm to support the continued growth of our gardens and natural place spaces.

We at Black Hill Kindergarten are committed to continual learning and improvement. We are constantly reflecting and evolving as we consider current practice such as the Early Years Learning Framework, current theoretical works, and the concept of an Emergent Curriculum. We strive to maintain better working conditions and incentives which reflect the real value of our professional team. We are also committed to ongoing staff development and interpersonal development training. We believe all early childhood professionals need to be respected as individuals and as valuable members of our team and the whole profession.

## WHAT TO BRING TO KINDER

### 4YO PROGRAM

Each session your child will need to bring with them:

- A named bag
- A **named** sunhat (from September 1<sup>st</sup> through to 30<sup>th</sup> April)
- A lunchbox with piece of fruit or similar healthy snack, lunch with an additional snack and an afternoon snack (please provide additional snacks if your child is a big eater)
- A **named** drink bottle (filled with water only)
- A warm **named** coat and hat, in winter we will venture outside every session for some fresh air and exercise (unless it is heavily raining).
- A change of clothes, underwear, and socks

Finally, please remember you are always welcome to observe your child at play. Your child's development and happiness are of the utmost importance to us.

### 3YO PROGRAM

Each session your child will need to bring with them:

- A named bag
- A **named** sunhat (from September 1<sup>st</sup> through to 30<sup>th</sup> April)
- A lunchbox with a piece of fruit or similar healthy snack, lunch with an additional snack
- A **named** drink bottle (filled with water only)
- A warm **named** coat and hat, in winter we will venture outside every session for some fresh air and exercise (unless it is heavily raining).
- A change of clothes, underwear, and socks with extras for children who are toilet training
- Nappies, as we do not provide them. We have a supply of wipes so these are not required.

## DAILY ROUTINES

Your child will have a couple of things to do before they begin day at kindergarten. Please support your child to placing their bag in their locker and find their name tag. Encourage them to do these tasks themselves.

We begin our kinder day by having a play indoors. After a play we pack away and have a short group session, then we either sit down together to eat our morning tea fruit snack or children can choose to play instead, eating when they are ready. Afterwards we then begin working at various experiences inside. We

then pack away where we have been working and go outside. Depending on the weather we may enjoy lunch outside. Please refer to 'kinder routines' display in the room for more details on the routine.

**3 yr old's:** Our afternoon routine is flexible. Sometimes we may end the session outdoors and sometimes we finish indoors. In this instance, the children must wait on the mat until staff say their names, this ensures that every child is released into the care of the person authorised to collect them. This routine may vary at times and is flexible to meet children's needs.

**4 yr old's:** After lunch we will have a class relaxation time (resting, meditation, yoga, reflective drawing). In the afternoon we enjoy an afternoon snack then pack our bags. We end our day with a child choice group activity or a play outside.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD SETTLE

- In the week before kindergarten begins, discuss our routine, and use the Educators names.
- Always say goodbye to your child. Leaving when they are not looking can be distressing. If your child is experiencing separation difficulties please be guided by staff, often it is best to say goodbye and leave quickly. You are more than welcome to telephone us to see how your child has settled. Be assured your child's emotional wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us and we will contact you if we believe they will not settle.
- Ask about their day, what story did you read, what songs did you sing, did you do a puzzle, did you make a friend, did anything funny happen..... etc.
- Arrive on time to collect your child, children can become distressed quickly if they are left waiting, especially if they are the last one.

## RECORD KEEPING

On enrolment you will fill out a confidential enrolment form. We ask that you ensure that the information on this form is continually kept up to date, throughout the year. Please let staff know if any of the following information changes.

- Change of address, home, mobile, work telephone numbers
- Change to emergency contacts
- Altering, adding authorised persons contact details
- Update immunisation details
- Medical information, allergies, asthma, diet.

## WHAT KINDERGARTEN OFFERS YOUR CHILD

At Black hill kindergarten our programme reflects the importance of play-based learning offering a wide range of play experiences to all children. We encourage children to make choices about their play and extend on abilities, experiences, interests, and all areas of development.

It provides an atmosphere where they are free to explore. In this setting your child 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 their feelings and ideas, is learning to play with others, is encouraged to be a confident and involved learner and an effective communicator.

Our curriculum is based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Our Philosophy and curriculum are displayed in our room.





## 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 can be managed on their own. Tracksuit pants are ideal for children to wear to kindergarten. Please send your child to kindergarten in sensible shoes that allow them to run, jump and climb. Thongs and 'Crocs' are not suitable footwear for kindergarten. When the UV rating is 3 or above a sunhat is essential for outside play (we are a sun smart centre). 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.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To comply with the National Quality Standard, all parents/authorised persons leaving 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.

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, parents are required to come in to the kindergarten to pick up children.

If you are going to be late, please call us so that we may reassure your child. Please keep in mind that staff are not responsible for children before or after the session.

The gates are to always remain closed. **Only let your child out the gate.** Please do not allow children to climb or swing on the gates

## 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 or coming in for class programs (Mystery readers, stay and play) or out of session by supporting social events and providing your feedback and ideas. We also have two rosters that you can put your name down for; laundry and taking out class pet budgies home for the weekend.

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.

## SPECIAL DAYS/EXCURSIONS

In order to enrich the children's experiences, we may have special days through the year. These may include a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', Footy Day, Dress Up Day, visits to the Black Hill Primary School etc.

Parents will sign a Routine Excursion Permission form as part of our enrolment process which will allow us to take your child outside the kindergarten when necessary. Details of these special days will be sent home prior to the event.

## BIRTHDAYS

We love birthdays at kindergarten and celebrate by lighting candles and singing birthday songs. Parents are welcome to supply a cake (small cupcakes are ideal) to celebrate their child's birthday with their Kindergarten group. We sing Happy Birthday at the end of our session and the children can take a cake as they leave, if their parents wish. Please see staff if you have any queries.



## NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES

Each family has a file where your child's art work, newsletters, and notices will be placed. Keep an eye on your file and storypark for all the happenings at the kindergarten.

## HEALTH AND ABSENCE

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

In fairness to other children, their families and staff please keep your child at home for 48 hours after diarrhoea/vomiting ceases.

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 the teacher.

## IMMUNISATION

By law to finalise your kindergarten enrolment you must provide the kindergarten with a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows your child is up to date with all immunisations that are due or able to receive for their age. In some circumstances a 16 week 'grace period' can be applied so your child can start at the service while you arrange to get a statement. The kinder can advise you if that applies to you.



The quickest way to get your child's statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively you can call the AIR on 1800 653 809 to request your child's statement to be sent to you.

More information can be found at [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

## 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.

## FIRST AID KIT

The First aid kits are located in the Evacuation Pack, hanging next to the double doors and a primary one on top of the piano. Each staff member is trained in First Aid, Asthma Management and Anaphylaxis.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Children learn in the context of their families and families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. Professionals too, play a role in advancing children's learning and development. Professionals engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives. Early childhood professionals:

- Use families' understandings of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- Create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development experiences
- Actively engage families and children in planning children's learning and development
- Provide feedback to families on their children's learning and information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community." (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework)

We hope to increase our involvement in our wider community, through experiences such as the clean-up Australia day, visiting Pineview nursing facility and using the variety of skills our families possess to enhance our programme.

## FINALLY

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 hope your association with Black Hill 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 to be part of your child's early education.*