



Family Information Booklet 2025

Enriching children's
lives through learning

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

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WELCOME TO BONSHAW 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.



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 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.

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



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TERM DATES FOR 2025

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

* There will be 2 child free curriculum days during the year for Staff to attend Professional Development Sessions.

SESSION TIMES FOR 2025

All groups are composite 1st year (3yo) and 2nd year (4yo) children

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Parwang	8:30 – 4:00		8:30 – 4:00		
Djirm A	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		
Djirm B		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00
Djirm C			9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00
Djirm D	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00	
Djirm E	9:00 – 2:00			9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00



OUR KINDERGARTEN

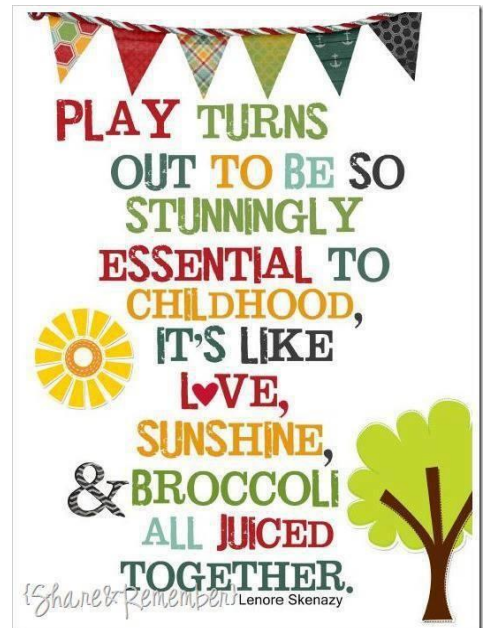
At Bonshaw Kindergarten we encourage your child to grow, develop and learn in a warm, caring and safe environment. The kindergarten program is planned and delivered by a qualified Early Childhood Teacher and is eligible for funding by the Victorian Government.

We are a community kindergarten offering quality kindergarten programs to three- and four-year olds. The Eureka Community Kindergarten Association looks after our operational needs, with a parent & Friends group organising fundraising and social events.

We offer a broad range of experiences and activities to meet every child's educational, developmental and enjoyment needs. The program is play based, allowing each child to follow their interests and grow and develop at their own pace.

Thank you for choosing Bonshaw Kindergarten for your child's kindergarten year. We look forward to sharing a wonderful year with your child full of learning, discovery, wonder and fun.

Please keep this handbook to refer to throughout the year



OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Bonshaw, we are dedicated to embedding Indigenous Perspectives into our key areas. We are passionate, mindful, thoughtful and value all that that brings to our curriculum.

Environments

At Bonshaw, we see the environment as the third teacher, a place that is organised intentionally to be aesthetically pleasing and grounded in nature. Whether outdoors or indoors, the children are able to explore their interests in an environment that is stimulating and challenging, as well as predictable and safe.

Our People

People are at the heart/core of Bonshaw's values and commitment to community connections, cultural authenticity and a strong sense of belonging. Our people are diverse and include the staff, families, children and the wider community. Together, we are a team who collaborate in the best interests of the children.

Relationships

Our relationships at Bonshaw reflect ECKA's four core values, in that they are respectful, compassionate, collaborative and courageous. We work hard to build a culture of trust through authentic and supportive communications that encourage warm and welcoming interactions.

Education

John Dewey states - *Education is not preparation for life; Education is life itself.*

Our philosophy of education reflects the idea that we will nurture, in ourselves and in the children, the learning dispositions of curiosity, exploration, resilience and independence in order that we remain lifelong learners.

Once your child has settled into our service, you can continue to support their development by:

- Maintaining a good relationship with the service's staff to continue the two-way communication
- Talking to staff about your child's interests to see how they can be included in their day
- Letting the service know if your child won't be attending on a particular day because they are sick or you're on holiday
- Asking about your child's progress against developmental milestones and working with staff to strengthen learning and developmental opportunities both at the service and at home
- Reading newsletters and other information provided by the service
- Talking to staff about your child's transition to different rooms at a centre as they develop. This can sometimes cause children to become anxious as they have a new educator or new friends
- Taking an interest in the service's activities and volunteering to participate, if you can. It might be for a fete, a working bee or an excursion. You are part of the service's community, not just your child
- If you have particular family or cultural values, let your service know how you would like these to be included and respected
- Getting to know your child's friends and their parents and arranging play dates or other activities with them outside of the service
- Letting staff know about things that have happened at home that might have unsettled your child, e.g., the arrival of a new baby, your child had a late night, they are excited because their cousin is staying with you on holiday, there's been a change in living arrangements etc.

Educators at our service will support your child's development by:

- Documenting your child's learning and development and identifying your child's strengths and areas where they might need help or encouragement
- Investing time in your child's interests and challenging them with new and exciting activities to extend their development
- Encouraging your child to explore and learn through play
- Developing a tailored program for your child based on learning outcomes from a framework like the **Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**, which is a guide for all early childhood educators who work with children from birth to 5 years old
- Letting you know if your child is sick or has an accident at their service
- Ensuring your child is safe and happy
- Identifying if your child might benefit from specialist support e.g. speech therapy

HELPING YOUR CHILD SETTLE IN AND ENJOY THEIR YEAR

- Talk to your child about Kinder. Drive by and point it out. Use the teachers and educators' names. Let children know that staff are there to help them. Discuss the routine and what is expected of them.
- Practice opening lunchboxes and containers. Try snack foods to make sure your child likes them.
- Have shorter sessions if you feel your child is tired or not yet ready for the longer day.
- Help your child to put their bag away and settle on the mat.
- Always say goodbye to your child. Leaving when they are not looking can be very distressing for young children.
- Ask about their day and remember lots more happens at kinder than artwork.
- Take the time to meet other parents and children so you can know your child's friends.
- Arrive on time to collect your child. Children can become distressed quickly if they are left waiting.

WHAT TO BRING

- A named back pack, big enough to hold children's lunchbox, spare clothing and art work.
- A piece of fruit to share in the morning, and a healthy lunch
- A **complete change of clothes** including underwear, socks, singlet, t-shirt, jumper and pants. Please name all clothing.
- A named coat and beanie in colder months. Hats will be supplied by the kindergarten.

SMILES 4 MILES PROGRAM



Our 4yr old group participates in the Smiles 4 Miles program which promotes healthy eating and lifestyles and oral health in young children

The Smiles 4 miles program aims to improve the oral health of preschool aged children in Victoria. It is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria which works in partnership with local organisations to improve the oral health of the youngest children in the community.

The program is based on the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools Framework and is delivered predominantly in kindergartens. Smiles 4 miles reaches over 28,000 children and their families across 480 early childhood education and care services around Victoria.

The key messages promoted in the program are:

- **Drink Well:** children are encouraged to drink water instead of sugary drinks
- **Eat Well:** children should eat a variety of nutritious foods
- **Clean Well:** children are taught good tooth cleaning technique to maintain healthy teeth and gums, with a focus on brushing twice a day and using toothpaste with an appropriate amount of fluoride.

MEALS AND DRINKS

During a Kinder session;

- All children will need a piece of fruit, lunch and a drink bottle with water
- A sandwich or small meal such as pasta salad and a healthy snack such as; fruit, dried fruit, rice crackers, cheese slices, yoghurt or dry biscuits are some suggestions.

As we encourage children to make healthy food choices, therefore we ask parents to provide snacks or lunches that are low in sugar, fat or salt.

e.g. of foods that are not recommended for kinder are:

- Jam, honey or Nutella
- Nutri grain bars, Milo Bars, LCM, muesli bars, pureed fruit, Roll Ups or other high fat/sugar bars
- Chips, chocolates, lollies, sweet biscuits
- Cordial, soft drink, juice, flavoured milk



Morning Tea Routine

We have shared fruit at morning tea time. This encourages children to try different tastes and textures they may not have experienced before.

Lunch Routine

We have lunch as a group between 12.30 and 1pm.

Special Dietary Requirements

Please discuss with staff if your child has any special dietary needs.

TOILETING

We encourage all children to toilet independently. However, we recognise that all children are not ready to do this at the same time. Please provide nappies or pull ups if your child requires these and/or several changes of clothes (including shoes) if your child is just beginning to toilet train.

Staff are happy to support all efforts to assist families in this process. Please discuss with staff your child's needs.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness and Infectious Diseases

We ask all families to help us minimise the risk of spreading infections and diseases by keeping children home and notifying the Kinder when your child is ill or diagnosed with an infectious illness. If your child is too unwell to participate in the whole program, both indoors and out, then they should be kept home until they are feeling better.

In the case of an infectious disease the child should be kept away from Kinder as per the "Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion from School, Pre-School and Child Care Centre for Cases of Contact with Infectious Diseases." '

Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services of Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts' table can be viewed here <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

In the event of illness staff will:

- Make the child comfortable
- Contact the parent (or emergency contact if parents cannot be reached) to collect the child
- Fill out an illness form and have the parent sign the form upon collection of the child.

Medication

If your child requires medication while at Kinder, the parent/guardian will need to fill in a medication sheet detailing the name of the medication, when it was last given, the dosage last given, the time, circumstances and dosage to be given while at Kinder. Two staff will check all details of the medication before giving it to the child. Medication should be given to staff and placed in the first aid cupboard or fridge.

Please note: Medication must be in the child's name and must be within the use by date. The child can only be given the recommended dosage as per medication or doctors written instructions

SUN CARE



We are a sun smart Centre and as such follow recommendations from the Anti-Cancer Council. Children will be given their own broad brim hat that will stay at Kinder. Sunscreen will be supplied. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for outside play. **No singlet tops are to be worn**; children's shoulders and upper arms should be covered. If children are not clothed properly their play will be restricted to shady areas. From September to April and when the UV rating is 3 and above children will be required to wear their hat at all times.

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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Before and After Sessions: Parents are asked to supervise their children before and after sessions. Only children in your care are to be let out the entrance gate.

Birthdays: Parents please check with the staff to discuss how birthdays are celebrated at kinder.



Children's Possessions: It is preferred children do not bring in items from home, however at times children may want to show or may be attached to particular items. If possible, please clearly name the item. Inform staff that the child has brought something in. Although all care is taken with children's possessions accidents can happen, for this reason we suggest very special items are left at home or given to staff to put in the office.

Clothing: Children should wear comfortable clothing that they are able to move freely in and get dirty in. Some paints do stain clothing (and we love mud and water!) A complete change of clothing including socks, underwear, singlet, t-shirt and pants should be packed in the child's bag. Please name all items of clothing including hats, coats and jumpers. As we go outside in all weather, children will require a coat during colder months.

NOTE: children should not wear thongs, crocs, slip on or party shoes as these are too dangerous for running and climbing activities. **SINGLET TOPS ARE NOT TO BE WORN** children's shoulders must be covered

Communication: Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher through the Storypark App about their child, the program, concerns and suggestions. Parents are invited to make a time to meet with the teacher in person if preferred.

Excursions/Incursions: The kindergarten may conduct excursions and incursions during the year. Permission will be sought from parents for any excursions outside of the kindergarten building and grounds. Parent helpers may be requested on some occasions.

Gate: The gate is to remain closed at all times. Only let your child out of the gate. Please do not let children climb or swing on the gate.

Junk and 2nd Hand Materials: Children enjoy all sorts of items to use in the art area including; boxes, tubes, cardboard, paper, off cuts, corks, plastic, lids etc. Please feel free to bring these items in. We especially enjoy unusual items you may be able to source from your work place such as; plastic rings, cylinders, laminate squares, samples, paper, envelopes, cards etc. We can also use items such as pots and pans, spoons, trays, utensils, school uniforms, tyres, toys, dress ups, outdoor equipment etc. If you are unsure, please talk to staff.

Library: At the beginning of the year each child will decorate a library bag. Children are then able to borrow up to 2 books at a time. Books can be borrowed on each child's allocated day, once a week. Children bring library books to the mat time in the morning.



Newsletters: Newsletters and notices will be posted on the Storypark App. If you would like to put a notice in our newsletter please speak to staff.

Notice Pockets: Each child has a notice pocket in the foyer with their first name on it which we will use on occasions to disseminate information. Please check with staff before putting anything such as birthday invites, party plans or advertisements into the pockets.

Photos: We take photos of children to display around the room and individual portfolios Parent/guardians are asked to sign a permission form allowing photos to be taken and their uses at enrolment. Please note your child's photo may be in another child's portfolio. E.g., group shots. If this is an issue please speak to staff.

A professional photographer takes individual photos and a group photo during the year.

Families must follow the permission for photography guidelines signed at the beginning of the year. Please check with staff for more information.

Policies: Are available on the ECKA website: ecka.org.au

Siblings: Siblings are welcome at the kindergarten however they must be supervised at all times by the parent/guardian. Staff cannot be responsible for siblings.

