



Family Information Booklet 2024

Enriching children's
lives through learning

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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 CRESWICK & DISTRICT PRESCHOOL

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.



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 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 operates 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 INFORMATION

Creswick & District Preschool

24 Victoria St, Creswick 3363

Journey Room (4yo)

(03) 03 5345 1164 / 0457817311

creswick.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

Bunjil Room (3yo)

03 5345 2274 / 0409932973

creswick.bunjil.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au



11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree VIC 3355

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TERM DATES FOR 2024

2024	Start Date	Finish Date	Public Holidays
Term 1	5 th February *	28 March	Labour day 11 th March
Term 2	15 April	28 June	ANZAC Day 25 th April Kings Birthday 10 th June
Term 3	15 July	20 September	
Term 4	7 October	19 December	Melbourne Cup 5 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.

SESSION TIMES FOR 2024

1st Year Groups (3yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Bunjil	9:15 – 2:15		9:15 – 2:15	9:15 – 2:15	

2nd Year Groups (4yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wirrang A	9:00 - 3:00		9:00 - 3:00 (Alternating)	9:00 - 3:00	
Jumbuck	9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00 (Alternating)		
Currawong		9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00 (Alternating)	
Waa	9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00 (Alternating)		9:00 - 3:00	
Banya		8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00		

2024 TEACHING TEAM

Journey Room (four-year-old kindergarten)

Michelle Callahan - Kindergarten Teacher / Service Leader / Nominated Supervisor

BEd. Level 2 First Aid, Asthma Management. Anaphylaxis Awareness

Kate Muscat – Educator

Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, Level 2 First Aid, Asthma Management, Anaphylaxis Awareness

Holly Clark – Educator

Dip Children's Services, Level 2 First Aid, Asthma Management, Anaphylaxis Awareness

Bunjil Room (three-year-old kindergarten)

Kylie Tallent - Kindergarten Teacher

Bachelor of Arts/Primary Teaching, Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Teaching, Certified Supervisor, Level 2 First Aid, Asthma Management, Anaphylaxis Awareness

Barbara Howard – Educator

Dip Children Services, Certified Supervisor, Level 2 First Aid, Asthma Management, Anaphylaxis Awareness

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2024

WEEK 1						
Group		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		February 4 th	February 5 th	February 6 th	February 7 th	February 8 th
Bunjil	Group A			9:15 – 11:15	9:15 – 11:15	
	Group B			12:15 – 2:15	12:15 – 2:15	
Wirrang					9:00 – 1:00	
Jumbuck			9:00 – 1:00	9:00 – 1:00		
Currawong				9:00 – 1:00	9:00 – 1:00	
Waa			9:00 – 1:00		9:00 – 1:00	
Banya			9:00 – 1:00	9:00 – 1:00		

WEEK 2					
Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	February 12 th	February 13 th	February 14 th	February 15 th	February 16 th
Bunjil	9:15 – 2:15		9:15 – 2:15	9:15 – 2:15	
Wirrang	9:00 – 3:00		9:00 – 3:00	9:00 – 3:00	
Jumbuck	9:00 – 3:00	9:00 – 3:00			
Currawong		9:00 – 3:00	9:00 – 3:00	9:00 – 3:00	
Waa	9:00 – 3:00			9:00 – 3:00	
Banya		8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00		

WELCOME TO OUR KINDERGARTEN

Welcome to Creswick & District Preschool, we look forward to the year ahead with great enthusiasm and excitement and hope it is filled with joy, growth, learning and laughter for both your child and yourself.

Contained in this booklet is information that answers some frequently asked questions, details of how the kindergarten operations and how you can participate.

This year your child will have the opportunity to engage in his/her own learning, make friends, make discoveries, hopefully make lots of mistakes and learn a lot more from them. There will be problem solving, sorting, painting, singing, dancing and a plethora of new and exciting activities for them to try.

Your child will have the chance to share stories from home, celebrate birthdays and become a VIP within our kindergarten community. Along with your child, we welcome you, their families to also become part of our kindergarten community, by spending time with them at kinder, sharing photos, family happenings and any skill you may have (reading a book to a child is a skill – you will be most welcome).



Creswick & District Preschool is a community kindergarten that is funded by the Victorian State and The Federal Governments and managed by the Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA). The kindergarten is respondent to the Education and Care Services National Regulations' (2012) and the Education and Care National Law Act' (2010). The educational program is underpinned by the Victorian Early Year Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the national framework 'Belonging, Being and Becoming'. The kindergarten currently holds a 'Meeting the National Standards' rating for the National Quality Framework' (NQF).

PHILOSOPHY

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past & present.

We as educators recognise the importance of children learning through play. We endeavor to honor what play means to each and every child and will facilitate and scaffold play in a respectful, unhurried and genuine manner by providing open-ended play-based education.

As Educators, we join together to work collaboratively and respectfully, with all children and families, to recognise the importance of their culture and beliefs. *We support First Nations Peoples, embedding their culture, language, history, art and understanding of Country in our program in support of reconciliation and understanding.* We listen, observe & record, respond and analyse the play of the children within our kindergarten and recognise the uniqueness and diversity of the children, families and our wider community.

Through active listening, we are respecting the voice of the child and their families. We use their voices to guide our educational programs, introducing learning activities that come from their interests and ideas, based on their needs and developmental stage.

We provide inviting and rich learning environments and practice sustainability in both our indoor and outdoor settings. We provide resources that support children as they deepen and expand their play and learning. We encourage the children to achieve to the best of their abilities.

We are guided by the ECKA values, Early Years Learning Framework, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the National Quality Standards. Being reflective in our practice we strive to be innovative and courageous in our planning and guide the children and their families through this educational journey

Enriching Children's Lives Through Learning

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ENROLMENT FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

All children are required to have a completed enrolment form on file at the kindergarten prior to commencement. Enrolment forms are accessed online.

Enrolment cannot be completed until you provide us with a current Immunisation History Statement'. Access your account on the 'mygov website: www.mygov.au or request a copy at the Medicare office in Centrelink.

All other paperwork (in the pack) is required back at the kindergarten by **13th December** for processing.

Interview Appointment:

All parents and children will be invited to an interview appointment in the week prior to sessions commencing. You will have the opportunity to select the time most suited to you at the Information session. Interviews provide a wonderful opportunity for the children to familiarize themselves with the environment and to meet their teachers and educators. Teaching staff will have processed your enrolment forms and this appointment gives teachers and parents the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any issues.

If you are unable to make your allocated interview time, please contact the kindergarten to organise another time.

ORIENTATION TIMETABLE

We acknowledge that children are exposed to a variety of social experiences prior to commencing kindergarten and cope with new experiences differently. For some children starting in a new environment with new teachers, educators, children, routines and expectations may be overwhelming. We want to ensure that each child's transition to the kindergarten setting is a happy and positive experience. Teaching staff have designed and 'Orientation Timetable' to support the children's transition the new environment. Please find the timetable in your pack. On conclusion of the 'Orientation timetable' normal session times will commence. If individual children require a longer orientation programme or are not coping with the full hours due to tiredness, separation anxiety or the heat at the start of the year, parents may choose to reduce the number of days/hours that the child attends in the first few weeks. Please discuss your child's individual needs with your teacher. Individual orientation plans can be discussed on Interview Day'.

RISK MANAGEMENT / COMMUNICATION PLAN INTERVIEWS

Parent/s/guardian/s of every child that has a diagnosed illness or medical condition, with or without medication, will need to attend an interview to complete an assessment and communication plan. Any family with court orders related to custody will also require to attend a meeting. Please contact your child's teacher to make a time to meet.

BARE FOOT INPUT AND MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT AT KINDER

In Journey Room at the beginning of each year, we observe how children walk down stairs and it is with alarming observations that they are unable or reluctant to walk down the stairs with one foot per stair. Some children were stepping with two feet per stair, some were stepping with two feet per stair sideways and others were going very, very cautiously.

From these observations and through discussions and some research we have come to the decision that if a child wants to remove their shoes, they are free to do so (as long as they put their socks in their shoes so as not to lose the socks) and weather permitting, of course. They can be barefooted inside or out, but need to put them on to go to the bathroom for hygiene purposes.

A little of our research has shown the following:

- Everyone's feet are complex, each foot contains 26 bones and 35 joints with ligaments and muscles crisscrossing to support and hold it together.
- By connecting with the world through our feet, children are developing complete range of movement in the foot and ankle joints. Strong feet and legs will aid their stability and will further support their hips and back, improving their posture and body growth.
- Having endless opportunities to walk, run and climb barefooted, especially on uneven surfaces, allow the children to connect with the ground – in all its variety – so they can not only develop their physical capacity to move freely in our world, they will also create healthy brains which can function at more optimum levels.
- When children move about barefooted, they get feedback from the ground so they keep their heads up more when walking around. This means they don't need to look down as much and it's the looking down that throws children off balance and causes them to fall.
- Running with bare feet helps to develop our balance system and this can only be developed through movement. Balance does more than develop posture and motor skills. It also supports centres involved in eye movements, spatial awareness and the executive sense of time and finally it is linked physiologically to biochemical pathways involved in anxiety.

Removing their shoes and socks or sandals also creates an opportunity for the children to take responsibility for their belongings and they then get to practice putting them back on when it is time to do so and being independent in their own self-care.

We have also painted footprints (in alternating colours) on our stairs, going up and down, showing the children where to place their feet as a visual reminder for them.

WHAT TO BRING TO KINDERGARTEN EACH DAY

- Kinder bag (large enough to hold children's lunch box, spare clothing {underwear, shorts/pants, sock & a wetbag} and art work)
- sunscreen – named (if you are choosing to supply your childs)
- Warm coat and hat (winter months) – gumboots
- Water bottle with **water only**
- Packed lunch in containers that children can open on their won. Please limit packaging and landfill



Please ensure all belongings are clearly named

LUNCHBOX CHOICES

During the beginning of this year at our kindergarten, we have noticed that meal times were becoming a stressful part of our days. We felt that as a community, sitting together to enjoy meals was an important way in which we were able to build relationships with the children and for them to have the opportunity to chat with their peers while enjoying their food.

Throughout the meal times, we had children continually ask educators 'what should I eat, what should I eat next?' This meant children yelling out across the room to the closest educator or getting up a wondering around the room to ask the question.

We had children who were happy to sit and chat, but we found a number of the children were finding this difficult especially when we were reminding them to have 'fruit first', 'make a wise choice', 'is that a sometimes food or an all the time food?'.

We then started to watch, reflected and posed questions with one another as a team such as;

1. Why we as educators were suggesting what the children ate throughout the day?
2. Were we the ones who were creating the stress within the room at meal times?
3. Was it our rights to decide that the food being sent in by their parents was healthy or not?
4. What would happen if we give the children the opportunity to decide for themselves what to eat and when to eat their food?
5. What would our role then be during meal times?
6. What would the parents think if we were not supporting the children to make healthy choices

From these questions we decided to share our thoughts with the children through conversations over the next few weeks. The children shared that they would like to eat the food that their 'tummy wanted first' and then the 'other stuff' that was in their lunchboxes. We then shared the conversations with our families via Storypark that we were going to move forward with the children being autonomous in their food choices according to what was within their lunchboxes.

To begin with, we still had a couple of children asking what they should eat, educators would, as decided in our reflections, suggest 'whatever your body thinks it needs to eat'. The children would then look in their lunchboxes and make a selection according to what they perceived they needed to eat.

The stress levels in the educators and the children following this was amazing, the rooms were calmer during our community meal times and the children were happier and were able to sit for longer and have wonderful conversations with one another and educators.

We have had positive responses with parents supporting us with this change in our daily mealtimes.

As part our **Anaphylaxis Policy**, if we have children attending the center with allergies we are required to develop a 'Risk Minimisation Plan'. This may mean that we will need to prohibit certain foods. You will be notified of this at the commencement of the kindergarten year or if it occurs during the year.

SUNSMART

Our kinder policy requires all children, teachers, volunteers, parents and students to wear a sun hat from September 1 to the end of April and when the UV rating is above 3. If the weather is overcast and cool children will still be required to wear a sun hat (we will provide all children with a bucket hat). Please ensure that your child wears appropriate clothing. **No singlet tops or sleeveless dresses.** Tee-shirts and polo shirts are ideal. Children will be asked to play inside or in shaded areas of the garden if they do not have a hat or appropriate clothing. Please ensure your child has had sunscreen applied **before** arriving at kindergarten. Children will be assisted to apply their own sunscreen if required.

The kindergarten is a NON SMOKING environment

CLOTHING

WARNING: we get dirty! The children will be encouraged to engage in a range of activities during their time at kindergarten. All the children's learning is hands on, and even though they wear smocks for painting they will still manage to get dirty! Please send your child in clothes you don't mind getting dirty or marked. Our kindergarten uniform pieces are ideal! Uniform pieces can be purchased through ECKA. An order form is in your pack. Children need to wear solid non-slip and water proof footwear that enables them to run, climb and balance outdoors. *Slip-ons, crocs and thongs are not suitable.*

BRINGING TOYS TO KINDER

Please encourage your child to leave their precious toys at home. Children become very upset when their toys are lost or damaged. If toys are brought to kindergarten, we will encourage them to be left in the child's bag. Comfort toys/rug may come with the children if needed.

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND NOTICES

The kindergarten education program is developed and written by your child's kindergarten teacher under the guidance of the educational leader. An outline of current learning goals, teaching strategies and activities will be on display. Teaching staff will develop individual records of each child's learning, skills and interests and the programmed will be written to reflect these elements.

Regular observations, reflections and discussions will occur throughout the year between parents, children and teachers. Children's learning will be documented in individual 'Learning Portfolio's'. Displays in the classrooms and foyer will include learning data and reflective dialogue that will endeavor to interpret the children's learning, thinking and ideas. There is an emphasis on the process of learning rather than the end product and children are encouraged and supported to persevere in order to achieve mastery of a task before moving on.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development require us to display the following material for your attention:

- Outline of the program and activities
- Policies
- Hours and days of operation
- Admission requirements and enrolment procedures
- Arrangement for the delivery and collection of children
- Illness/accident/emergency procedures
- Complaints procedure

The curriculum is underpinned by Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, Developmental Milestones and a range of teaching and learning theories.

Practice Principles:

- Reflective practice
- Partnerships with families
- High expectations of every child
- Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- Equity and diversity
- Assessment for learning and development
- Integrated teaching and learning approaches
- Partnerships with professionals

Learning Outcome Areas:	Developmental Milestones Domains:
Children have a strong sense of identity Children are connected to and contribute to their world Children have a strong sense of wellbeing Children are confident and involved learners Children are effective communicators	Emotional Social Physical Cognitive Language

RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPERIENCES IN OUR SESSIONS

The children will be offered the opportunity to engage with a range of materials and equipment during their time at kindergarten. Teachers see materials as a 'language' that children can become proficient in. Just like speaking, children can develop the skills to express meaning and understanding using painting, drawing, sculpture, collage and construction. The children will be given the opportunity to explore and develop skills using a wide variety of media thus providing them with unlimited opportunity to express themselves, their wonderings and understandings. Children will be supported to develop the foundational skills of numeracy and literacy so that they have the skill-set to build on as they move into school.

Our major aims at the beginning of each year are to enable the children to smoothly transition into the program and to develop positive relationships with educators and each other.

In order to achieve these aims, we make considered choices about what experiences are available and how we, as educators, interact with the children. We plan to have as much time and attention available for individual children (and families) so that we may begin to know them and they us. Experience has shown us clearly that when children feel recognized, heard and safe that they are happier and more engaged. That our ability to be responsive and connected to the children's needs and enquiries is crucial for their transition and learning.

Children's brains are not receptive to learning if their basic needs for security, belonging and relatedness are unmet. As educators, we witness this every day and know that it is vital we are available and receptive to the children to support their emotional and social needs. This must happen before we can expect them to experience satisfaction in external, creative pursuits such as painting.

As educators, we intend to be available to children, to actively listen and respond, offer warm and meaningful contact, recognize their feelings and sensitively engage with them. While our experience has taught us to do this spontaneously, these crucial practices are made more difficult whilst we are mopping up spilled paint, cleaning easels, hanging up paintings or looking for texta lids.

The program in our Bunjil Room's (1st year of kindergarten) program is designed to provide rich learning opportunities for our youngest students. There is an emphasis placed on the development of skills needed to socialize, care for self and belongings and to develop speech, language and communication skills. Children will have opportunities to build on their motor skills, developing body awareness and the ability to move in the environment safely. The children will be supported to interact with others, share space and equipment and develop the skills needed to transition into 4-year-old kindergarten, whilst ensuring that this very special year in their life is celebrated. Children attending the 3-year-old program will receive a summative assessment page at the end of term 2 and four.

All children attending their first year of kindergarten in Bunjil Room must have turned three prior to starting

Catching teaching staff at the start and end of the day can be tricky as the teacher's attention will be on supervising the children. If you require more than a brief chat at the door, please make an appointment time with your child/s teacher.

All teachers & educators at Creswick & District Preschool work closely together, contributing to the learning programs of every child. From time-to-time teachers may wish to contact you to discuss your child's progress. Teachers may request a meeting time with you that is outside of teaching times. It is recommended that children do not attend meetings. Kindergarten teachers/educators are specialized in early childhood education and development and are able to support parents in their role. Referrals to other professionals (ie: speech pathologist, dentist) can be made by the teachers in consultation with or at the request of families. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher with any concerns or queries.

We are very grateful for the opportunity to provide a kindergarten program to you and your child/ren. We look forward to an exciting and productive year and thank you for entrusting your child's kindergarten education to us.

“Educators who give priority to nurturing relationships and providing children with consistent emotional support can assist children to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others. Responsive learning relationships are strengthened as educators and children learn together and share decisions, respect and trust. Responsiveness enables educators to respectfully enter children’s play and ongoing projects stimulate their thinking and enrich their learning.”

Belonging, Being, Becoming

The Early Years Framework for Australia