



Daylesford Preschool

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

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 Hepburn Shire Council.



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 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

WELCOME TO DAYLESFORD PRESCHOOL

Once you walk through the gates you become a part of the wonderful world of kindergarten. Our team of educators look forward to working in partnership with you throughout the year in your child's learning and development.

This handbook provides valuable information about the preschool and it will help you prepare for this important time in your child's life.

History

The history of the preschool dates back to 1956, when it was known as the Daylesford Free Kindergarten. However old articles show that building works had been in discussion since 1953. The kindergarten was run by a committee with Mr Bill Ogden as president and directress Mrs Joan Endacott. In 1981 the service celebrated 25 years, with current children and staff and people who were a part of the original establishment.

In 2007 the service celebrated 50 years and a dinner was held to mark the occasion at the Royal Hotel Daylesford.

The preschool has a long-standing history of being supported by its community and was committee run for many years.

In 2010 Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA) took over its management, supporting the continued upkeep of building and grounds, providing professional staff and establishing strong relationships in the community.



CONTACT INFORMATION



Daylesford Preschool

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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.

*We will be closed for two staff professional development days, dates to be announced

*Kindergarten will be closed on Total Fire Ban & Catastrophic Fire Rating Days.

SESSION TIMES FOR 2025

1st Years (3yo) & 2nd Years (4yo)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group 1	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		
Group 2	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00	
Group 3		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	
Group 4	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	

PROGRAM

The kindergarten program is on display at our sign in desk and available for parents and visitors to read. The program is updated regularly and parents are encouraged and welcomed to provide feedback throughout the year. It is also available to view when uploaded to our communication platform Storypark.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We at Daylesford Pre School:

Believe that all children belong and need to feel safe, secure and nurtured while at kindergarten. We focus on building strong, confident, positive and resilient personalities in our children with the focus on listening to the children's voice and their families. We value the input of families, children and all staff members when creating an open ended play based program, nurturing the social and emotional intelligences of the children.

Create a safe place for the children to flourish and grow. We provide a beautiful environment, both indoors and outdoors with purposeful, natural and engaging materials for the children to investigate and explore. We value nature play, with a large outdoor environment, with many natural resources, a small river bed, rain water tanks, rocks, logs, sticks, sand and climbing materials. We provide links to the environment and sustainability through all aspects of the kindergarten, composting, harvesting rain water, re using materials and a flourishing veggie patch, planted and tended to by the children. We promote risk taking and resilience building by allowing the children to climb trees and play outside in rain, snow, and sunshine.

Listen to the children and their voices are heard. We build strong connections with each individual child, ensuring that their individual needs and interests are met. We provide individual goals according to their own unique skills and capabilities. We respect each child, their culture and their lives, bringing these into

the classroom with the help of their families. We

create strong links with families and community, with many school visits throughout the year, with students from local schools planning engaging experiences for the kinder children regularly.

Parents are invited to take part in the program with family picnics, parents helpers and the stay and play program.

Acknowledge spirit of place. With a long history in the community, and gardens and hard wood floors that tell a thousand stories, Daylesford Pre School acknowledges those who were here before us. We acknowledge and honour the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the traditional custodians of the land with an importance on respecting culture and embedding it in our plans.

Provide open ended and joyous opportunities for play and investigation. We provide a nurturing high quality learning environment with a focus on safety, kindness, positivity, identity building and happiness.

We at Daylesford Pre School encourage wonder, curiosity and reflection in ourselves, children and families.



VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Department of Education and Early Childhood and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority developed the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework in 2009. The framework brings together the national Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. It identifies what children should know and be able to do from birth to eight years. The framework supports a partnership between families and all professionals who support the children's learning and development over this period and is designed to assist families and early childhood professionals to guide children's learning and development in the first eight years.



The Victorian Framework uses five outcomes to describe the key elements of children's learning and development. These are:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

The framework is used by educators to both design the types of experiences and opportunities that enable enrich children's development and assess children's progress towards these outcomes.

COMMUNICATION

We use different methods of communication to ensure parents are kept informed throughout the year. We have displays in our foyer relating to Community news and events, Schools and Kindergarten news.

We invite families to register with Storypark when they enrol, a platform used to share children's learning, photos and feedback. Storypark is used by staff to communicate program planning, community news and events, fundraising and reminders, health and nutrition articles and more.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

On arrival at the preschool please sign your child in, in the 'Sign in' book. It is a requirement that all children in attendance are signed in and out.



Children will only be released into the care of the person whose name is in the sign in book and if they have been authorised on the enrolment form.

Parents are to inform staff if an authorised person will be collecting their child. Photo identification will be requested should staff not have met them before.

On Arrival: Write time, sign name, and write who will be collecting child.

On departure: Write time, sign name.

Please make note of starting and finishing times and ensure those person's picking up are aware. Ensure staff are aware of any changes for the security of your child and to prepare child and reduce anxiety. Picking up on time helps children to feel safe and secure in the knowledge you will be there at the end of each day.

COMMENCING PRESCHOOL

The first few days, settling in to a new environment can be daunting for children. It is to be expected that most children will require support to feel safe and secure and need time to develop relationships with educators.

Please take the time to reassure your child they will have a great day and always say goodbye.

It is important that parents understand that kinder is about their child developing new relationships independently. It is quite normal that anxiety may be present, and some children may take longer to settle than others. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate in speaking to one of our staff.

MEDICATIONS

If children require medications or have specific medical needs, please ensure staff are advised. Medication will only be given to children after the parent has filled in the Medication book. Please note that all medication sent to kinder must be in the original container and in date, with the child's name and dosage clearly labelled.

Under no circumstances should medication of any kind be left in your child's bag.

IMMUNISATIONS



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

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Children's enrolment forms and developmental records remain confidential and are available for you to view on request. Daylesford preschool provides an open-door approach to communication and staff welcome you to chat about your child's learning and development at any time, or for longer discussions, an appointment can be made after session.

General Information

MORNING FRUIT AND LUNCH



We actively participate in the Smiles 4 Miles program and encourage your help and support to model and promote healthy eating and drinking practices.

Each child is to bring a healthy snack each day to kindergarten. This may consist of a piece of fruit, cut up vegetables, cheese or dried fruit.

Lunch is to include sandwich/wrap, dry biscuits, fruit, vegetable sticks, dips, cheese and yoghurt.

A water bottle is required for each session. Water is available at all times.

Please refrain from sending sweet treats and be mindful of processed and packaged foods. We encourage children to understand the importance of the 3 'R's reduce, reuse and recycle and develop lifelong sustainable practices.



Allergies

NOTE: Some foods may be prohibited if a child at risk of Anaphylaxis is enrolled at the preschool.

BIRTHDAYS



Children love celebrating their special day alongside their peers. We sing 'Happy Birthday' and parents are welcome to bring in cupcakes for the children to share. Please check with staff for any food allergies or intolerances.

We are happy to freeze cupcakes for children who may have intolerances, so no one feels left out on the day and ask that parents provide these cakes with their child's name.

CLOTHING

Please dress children in clothes that they can get messy in without concern, and clothes they can manage themselves. The kindergarten program offers children the ability to explore using all their senses and messy play encompasses water, sand, paint, goop, mud to name a few. Smocks are provided by the preschool.

Clothes appropriate to the weather conditions should be worn:

Term 1 & 4: Broad brimmed sun hat, *no singlet tops or sleeveless dresses please.*

We are a Sun Smart Centre and from mid-August through to the end of April hats need to be worn and sunscreen applied. Sunscreen is available in the foyer for parents to apply to ensure children are protected from harmful UV rays.

Term 2 & 3: A winter coat and warm clothing is recommended. Gumboots are great for wet weather play and slippers are welcome for use inside.

A spare set of clothes must be in your child's bag every day.

Footwear: Shoes should be worn to and from kindergarten. Thongs are not permitted as when the children are climbing the thongs can become a hazard and are not safe for running/active play and children can suffer injury. Shoes should have a good grip.

Joggers, sandals and lace-up shoes are recommended.



BELONGINGS

While toys can provide comfort for children when they first commence kindergarten, they soon become a distraction, can become lost, damaged or broken, causing undue stress for the child. Please discourage children from bringing toys from home.

All children are required to bring a kinder bag. Each child will be provided a locker to store bags and belongings in. Please name your child's clothing, food containers and drink bottle.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Each year we are asked by families how they can help support the kindergarten and contribute to both our community and the educational programs we provide to the children.

There are many different ways that families may contribute in and out of kindergarten sessions. Some of the activities in the kindergarten session may include; attending an excursion, helping the children plant in our vegetable garden, cutting up the shared fruit platter or coming in to read a story, or out of session by supporting social events and providing your feedback and ideas.

If you are interested in volunteering some time to help, please speak directly with the educators or message us via the Storypark app. We understand that people have busy lives and lots of commitments and if you are not able to indicate support right now, we completely understand, however if your circumstances change, please feel free to speak with educators as we will be happy for your help.

Please note that our parent volunteers do not need a working with children's check provided that the volunteering is in the group with your own child. Staff will fully supervise all volunteers in accordance with our volunteer and visitor policies.



VOLUNTEER SIGN IN BOOK

Parents/Volunteers are required to sign the Volunteer Sign-In Folder when they are helping out at kinder, which is located in the foyer.

RECYCLED MATERIALS

We love receiving clean recyclables for box construction. (paper, cardboard, boxes, lids, ribbon etc). We have many older members of our community who often stop by and donate. Often, we request special items for use in children's play, so before you throw out, please speak to staff – one person's trash is a kindergarten's treasure!