



**4yo Kindergarten**

**Family Information  
Booklet 2024**

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 HADDON EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES

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 Golden Plains 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](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



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## OUR KINDERGARTEN!

The kindergarten year is an important opportunity for your child to be supported in all curriculum areas prior to starting their schooling journey. It is a year of developing and acquiring important skills such as, problem solving, resilience, persistence and critical thinking. These learning opportunities will provide your child with the foundation for a positive learning future.

The dedicated staff at Haddon Early Education Services will nurture your child along this exciting journey within a play-based learning curriculum. Your child will enjoy opportunities for discovery, exploration and creativity, whilst developing positive social relationships with their peers and educators.

Your input into the kindergarten program is highly valued and appreciated i.e.

- Sharing skills, ideas, culture, and community experiences.
- Joining 'Parents and Friends' who assist with fundraising and social activities throughout the year.
- Volunteering time in the kindergarten as parent helper.

The educators at Haddon Early Education Services welcome family participation and input on running a successful learning program for your child. We believe learning outcomes are best achieved when there is a collaborative partnership between the families and educators. If you have a particular interest such as cooking, gardening, music etc. or a special activity that your child enjoys doing at home with you, we would welcome you to come and share this with us during a kinder session. Alternatively, you may prefer to just come and spend an hour or two helping out and spending time with your child during the session.

We hope that as parents and carers, you have an enjoyable year as you watch your kinder child grow and develop.

We look forward to getting to know you all.

## 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

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wattle	9:00 – 3:00	9:00 – 3:00		9:00 – 3:00 (alternating)	
Gumnuts	8:30 – 4:00		8:30 – 4:00		

## NO JAB NO PLAY

By law, to finalise enrolment of your child in kindergarten you must provide the service with an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). It must show that your child:

- is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR
- is on a recognised vaccine catch-up schedule OR
- has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Parents and carers can print a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement from:

- MyGov account
- Call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- visit a Medicare or Centrelink office

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register will be the only documentation accepted by early childhood education and care services for the purposes of confirming a child's enrolment in their service.

**\*\*DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY GP'S OR OTHER IMMUNISATION PROVIDERS WILL NO LONGER BE ACCEPTABLE AS PROOF OF IMMUNISATION\*\***



## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### Separation at Arrival

Often parents and children can become concerned about separating from each other. This is quite natural and we have some great tips to help you and your child move through this difficult stage. It is important that parents understand that kinder is about their child developing new relationships independently as they attend kinder. Your child will require positive guidance from you to settle. Please use positive comments at drop off i.e. "I will be here to pick you up at the end of your day." "I look forward to hearing about your favourite activities at pick up."



Some useful tips to prepare your pre-schooler are:

- Approach the first day of kinder with a positive and joyful outlook
- Go past the kinder and talk about it as your child's kinder
- Tell your child that this is what will happen
- Sit at an activity with your child to help them feel secure in their kinder environment.

Always say goodbye to your child and acknowledge at least one staff member so we are aware that your child is here.

Some useful websites with information about separation are:

- Kathy Walker: <https://earlylife.com.au/>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### Departure

At the end of each day we dismiss the children from the mat area after a goodbye song. We will call out each child's name before we release the child to their parents/ guardian.

This is a routine that we use as a friendly closure to our day together, as well as for safety purposes so children don't leave without supervision. We ask parents and carers to support us in this routine by waiting patiently until their name has been called out.

**Please supervise siblings at all times, under no circumstances are children to be left in the carpark by themselves.**

**Please be on time.** If you are going to be late, please call us so that we can reassure your child.

Only people nominated on your child's enrolment form are authorised to collect your child. If you need to add or update this list throughout the year please speak with a staff member.

**Throughout the year we may need to contact with you for a range of reasons. All contact details need to be up to date. Please ensure you make staff aware of any changes to your contact details as necessary.**

## ATTENDANCE

It is important that your child attends kinder regularly. Please let us know if your child will be absent.

## LUNCHBOXES



At HEES we are a Smiles 4 Miles accredited service. For this to continue we need your help and support to assist us in promoting healthy eating & drinking practices.

Each morning the children are given the opportunity of a progressive morning tea. This enables each child to enjoy some healthy choice snacks from their lunch boxes, when they are feeling hungry.

**\*\*We are a water only zone so please refrain from packing pop tops and juice boxes. Fresh filtered water is always available for your child to access. \*\***

Some suggestions for healthy lunchbox items are

- Fresh fruit (Children should and need to have at least 1 piece of fresh fruit per day)
- Carrot, Cheese and celery sticks
- Yoghurt
- Salads
- Wraps
- Sandwiches with nutritious fillings
- Saladas



**Please note, we are a nut free environment as we currently have children who have anaphylaxis to nuts. We encourage the children to bring healthy food items for morning tea and lunch however kindly ask they do not contain nuts.**

## CLOTHING

We provide many sensory and creative learning experiences which can be messy i.e. mud kitchen, digging in the garden, water play and painting.

Therefore, please dress children in:

- clothes that they can get dirty
- clothes that they can manage themselves – be aware of buttons, straps, shoe laces etc.
- No thongs or strappy dresses.
- SunSmart compliant clothing – hats, T-shirts. Please read the SunSmart Policy for clarification.



### Clothes appropriate to the weather conditions should be worn

- Broad brimmed sunhats that protects your child's face, head, neck and ears. Sun protection is required between September and April and when UV levels are 3 and over. You can check the SunSmart app or website each day for a daily UV rating.
- A winter coat – Haddon gets very cold and wet in winter;
- Gumboots & slippers are recommended in Terms 2 & 3.

## BIRTHDAYS

To help celebrate your child's birthday at kinder please feel free to bring along a prepacked treat or cupcakes. **However we do ask that they are store bought cupcakes and not homemade due to food allergies.**





## STORYPARK

Storypark is an online platform that allows us to communicate with families as well as share your child's learning and kindergarten experience. You will be able to access your child's planning and assessments throughout the year and have input to every step of your child's learning.

Every family will be asked to join Storypark.

Please check Storypark regularly as there will be regular, important correspondence from staff, Parents & Friends and ECKA on this platform. If you are not familiar with StoryPark or prefer another communication method please ensure you speak with your child's teacher.

## SLEEP

Kindergarten is a big day for your child and it is essential that they have adequate sleep in order to manage and enjoy all that kindergarten has to offer. Please ensure your child's bedtime allows them adequate sleep.

## CURRICULUM

Our early childhood curriculum is responsive to your child's interests, learning motivations and developmental needs. At Haddon Kindergarten, we value a child-led, child-directed learning environment through an emergent and play-based curriculum approach.

A rich play-based curriculum is provided each year that reflects all curriculum areas of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Framework with inviting, stimulating and progressively challenging learning experiences. Reflecting the VEYLDF Practice Principles, we support all children to achieve their potential through having high expectations for every child.

We embrace our natural environment and acknowledge the seasonal changes with many beautiful, interactive and creative art experiences. The seasons are closely observed and discussed during the year as we celebrate our beautiful surroundings.

Kindergarten provides your child with the opportunity to learn valuable life skills. Whilst it is important for your child to experience a rich year of kindergarten, it is also necessary to be mindful of the need to prepare children for school the following year. We begin this process very subtly from Term 1 and progressively introduce school readiness learning opportunities throughout the year. By the end of the kindergarten year, the children will be very familiar with school readiness skills such as taking responsibility for their belongings i.e. packing away their morning tea, lunch boxes and drink bottles, listening to instructions and actively participating during mat time.

Kindergarten is the first educationally based environment under the umbrella of learning through play.

All of the experiences are carefully set according to the following projected learning outcomes:

### 1. Identity:

Children have a strong sense of identity.

### 2. Community:

Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

### 3. Wellbeing:

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

### 4. Learning:

Children are confident and involved learners.

### 5. Communication:

Children are effective communicators.

... and of course the important aspects of developing appropriate social behaviours, and much, much, much more!

While this is a learning environment, the sessions are long, particularly at the beginning of the year. Special attention is given to the flow of the day, the children's energy and how the children are managing as a group. The staff will not only assist in the guidance of your child educationally, but will care for and nurture your child in the time they are with us.

We passionately enjoy our chosen careers and this is reflected in the cohesive relationships we have with each other as a team, as well as with the positive relationships forged with families and particularly with the children, who are the focus of our work.

The staff have a very strong work ethic at Haddon Early Education Services and are professionally motivated to provide an outstanding curriculum for all children. We attend regular Professional Development workshops to stay conscious of new ideas, refresh our outlook, and to network with other Early Childhood Professionals. We are also offered professional support from ECKA to assist with further study.

## ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS AT KINDERGARTEN

If your child is unwell or is unwell overnight, please don't send them to kinder to minimise the transmission of colds, coughs etc. In the interest of health and safety for all children and staff, we will not hesitate to call parents (or those listed on the enrolment form) if a child is not well at kinder. If your child is injured at kinder, we will also notify you either through a phone call or discussion at home time and discuss what occurred. Please inform staff if your child has been unwell.

Please inform staff if your child has been treated for head-lice so that parents can be informed to be extra vigilant.

### Medication

Please inform the staff before the beginning of the kinder year or as the need arises of any medical issues.

Legally, we are only able to administer prescribed medication which must be presented to a staff member and logged into the medications book.

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

## RECYCLED MATERIALS

We love clean recycled things, especially odd stuff!

\*\*\* We are unable to accept any items which have contained any nut products. Neither can we accept toilet rolls. Also, we love any preloved furniture donations such as cubby house furniture, shelving or even a couch. It is amazing the things that we could use- old bike wheels for weaving, old crates for garden beds, cut up trees for stepping stones, seats or old kitchen utensils and pans for our sandpit. Please check with staff if you or someone you know have anything to donate as it would be greatly appreciated.

## DELICATE TOPICS

Life will throw many varied challenges our way at times. Please feel reassured that we are trained in dealing with a wide range of family experiences and circumstances. Our role includes the provision of a safe and secure environment for you and your child. To assist us in this, we would very much appreciate you speaking confidentially with us about any personal family circumstances which may affect the wellbeing of your child.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

***“Young children learn the most important things not by being told, but by constructing knowledge for themselves in interaction with the physical world and with other children – and the way they do this is by playing.”***

Play nourishes every aspect of children’s development and learning. It forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical and emotional skills necessary for success in school life and play. Play paves the way for learning – it is a child’s window to the world.

While much learning does occur during group time and structured activities, spontaneous free play is equally important to early learning.

In play, children learn by combining their ideas, impressions and intuitions with experiences and opinions. They create ideas about their world and share them with one another. They establish a culture and a social world with their peers. Play allows children to make sense – and sometimes nonsense – of their experiences and discover the intimacy and joy of friendship. When it is self-directed, play leads to feelings of competence and self-confidence.

For example, block building and sand and water play lay the foundation for logical mathematical thinking, scientific reasoning and cognitive problem solving.

Rough-and-tumble play develops social and emotional self-regulation and may be particularly important in the development of social competence in boys.

Pretend play (socio dramatic) fosters communication, developing conversational skills, turn taking, perspective taking and the skills of social problem solving – persuading, negotiating, compromising and cooperating.

Pretend play with peers engages children in the same kind of representational thinking needed in early literacy activities. Children develop complex narratives in their pretend play. They begin to link objects, actions and language together in combinations and narrative sequences. They generate language suited to different perspectives and roles.

Play fosters creativity and flexibility in thinking. There is no right of wrong way to do things; there are many possibilities in play – a chair can be a car or a boat, a house or a bed.

### **Play and Literacy**

There are consistent findings in research about the close relationship between symbolic play and literacy development and good evidence that increasing opportunities for rich symbolic play can have a positive influence on literacy development.

### **The Value of Outdoor Play**

Nature has a positive impact on children’s physical and mental well-being. Natural landscapes in the outdoors typically provide:

- rich, diverse, multisensory experiences;
- opportunities for noisy, boisterous, vigorous, physically active play;
- opportunities for physical challenge and risk-taking that are inherent in the value of play – rough, uneven surfaces, with opportunities for the development of physical strength, balance and coordination;
- and natural elements and loose parts that children can combine, manipulate, and adapt for their own purposes.

*(Adapted from a report on Lessons in Learning, Let the Children Play: Nature’s Answer to Early Learning, Canadian Council on Learning, 2006).*