



Family Information Booklet 2024

Enriching children's
lives through learning

ecka.org.au  

A member of





At Linda Brown Preschool, we pay our respect to the Wadawurrung people, the traditional custodians of the learning environment on which we gather, nurture and teach children. We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and endeavour to embed their integral past, present and emerging traditions into our teaching pedagogy and practice.



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 LINDA BROWN 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. 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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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
3yo			9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00

2nd Year Groups (4yos)

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

OUR KINDERGARTEN

Welcome to Linda Brown Preschool. We look forward to the year ahead with great enthusiasm and excitement. Our service offers children a warm, caring and safe environment to learn, grow and develop, while also discovering a passion for life-long learning.

Linda Brown Preschool enjoys a proud history of providing kindergarten programs (3 and 4-year-old) for the children of Wendouree and the wider community since 1965. The teaching team are highly qualified and experienced and engage in continual improvement through professional development and the active engagement with the Quality Improvement Plan System. The service is rated as 'Meeting' the National Quality Standards.

Provided in this booklet is information that answers some frequently asked questions, details of how the kindergarten operates along with what you can expect throughout the year with us.

Thank you for choosing our kindergarten for your child's kindergarten year. We look forward to being part of your child's learning journey, as it will be a year full of lots of fun, wonder and learning.



'Anzac Poppy'
Artwork by 4-year-old

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We recognise and respect the Wadawurrung people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we learn and play. We value their knowledge and culture which is embedded within our practices.

Linda Brown Preschool is proudly managed by Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA). We have been providing 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs for the children of Wendouree and the wider Ballarat community since 1965. We take great pride in delivering an active play-based program, driven by a combination of child initiated and intentional teaching.

As a service, we are guided and influenced by the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) to provide experiences that support each child to grow and learn as they embark on their learning journey with us.

At Linda Brown Preschool, we believe that all children have their own unique sense of identity and individual needs. Each child can, at their own pace, develop independence, self-identity and an ability to become the instigator of their own learning, as we view them as competent and capable learners.

Our passion is to provide exceptional quality educational opportunities for every child, nurturing a sense of joy, a love of life-long learning and discovery and a sense of belonging through relationships and interactions.

What I love about kindergarten... 'Playing with all my new friends.'

What is central to our work is the needs, desires and spirit of each child. We recognise that each child has the right to be safe, healthy and happy and engage in tasks that are driven by their interests. By working to identify each child's learning style, the teaching team is able to provide tailored support in the most effective and appropriate way to all children. A diverse range of experiences and differentiated teaching strategies are used to 'scaffold' each child as they actively engage in their environment.

We view parents, guardians and the child's family as the primary educators of their child and believe that children bring to kindergarten the gained experiences and knowledge of their family, religion, culture and their community to share and build upon.

What I love about kindergarten... 'Drawing and making new friends.'

We actively seek to build reciprocal relationships with every child, family and the wider community. We believe that by doing so, a solid foundation is formed, allowing the teaching team to work cohesively with families to support every child as they reach their full potential.

We respect staff individuality, knowledge, qualifications and experience. Through reflective practices and ongoing professional development, the teaching team are committed to provide a high quality of learning and developmental opportunities for all children. The teaching team draw on a range of theorists to make meaning of children's learning and development and work within a clearly defined planning cycle to create a curriculum that meets each child's interests and needs. We take great pride in being positive role models for children and use a positive, professional and friendly approach when interacting with one another and the children.

What I love about kindergarten... 'My teachers, making friends, learning new things and playing outside.'

We view the environment as the third teacher which enables rich and meaningful learning opportunities to occur. Our aesthetically pleasing and welcoming environment invites children to explore, learn and play in a safe manner. The indoor and outdoor environments are carefully planned and maintained to be relevant to the interests and desires of the child. The child's voice is captured in many ways within the environment and integrated into our program of teaching and learning.

We recognise the vast range of educational opportunities that are available within the local community. We acknowledge that the community of Ballarat has a positive influence on the learning and development of children through its rich history and diverse people. We participate in excursions and incursions, making a connection to children's interest and the world they live in. We believe that all children, staff and families have the right to be treated with respect in a positive and accepting environment, where the rights of all individuals are acknowledged. We are a community within a community and we welcome you all to it.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The kindergarten's education program is developed and written by your child's kindergarten teacher under the guidance of the pedagogical leader. The teaching team use a clearly defined planning cycle, as they observe, listen, record and reflect on the children's learning and development, in order to provide a high-quality curriculum. An outline of current learning goals, teaching strategies and activities will be available to view. Teaching staff develop individual records of each child's learning, skills and interests and the program will be written to reflect these elements.

Regular observations, reflection and discussions occur throughout the year between parents, children and teachers to support the development the kindergarten program.

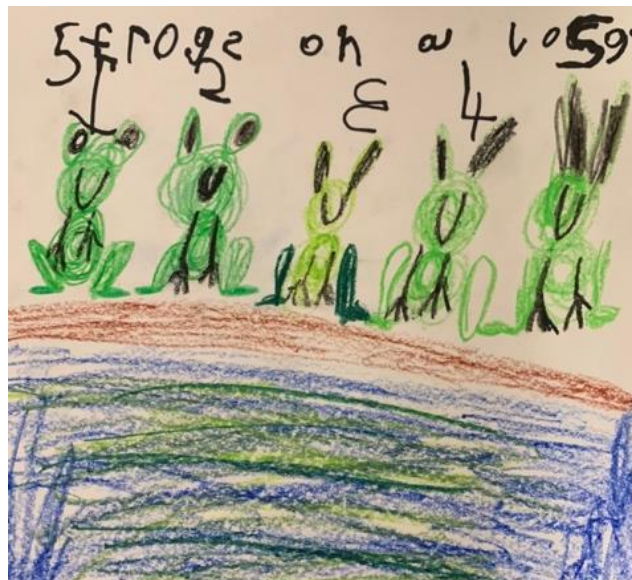
Children's learning will be documented on Storypark and in individual 'Learning Portfolios'. Displays in each classroom include learning data and reflective dialogue that will endeavour to interpret the children's learning, thinking and ideas. There is an emphasis on the process of learning, rather than the end product and children are encouraged and supported to persevere in order to achieve mastery of a task before moving on.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), Developmental Milestones and a range of teaching and learning theories.

Our 4-year-old program is designed to provide rich learning opportunities for the children to engage in, grow and learn. There is an emphasis placed on the development of skills needed to socialise, care for self and belongings and to develop speech, language and communication skills.

The children will be offered the opportunity to engage with a range of materials and equipment during their time at kindergarten. Children will be supported to build upon their already growing early literacy and numeracy skills, so that they will have the skill-set to continue to develop those abilities as they move into school.

Children attending our 4-year-old kindergarten program will receive a summative assessment page at the end of term 2 and a 'Transition for Learning and Development Statement (TLDS) in November, to support the child's transition to primary school.



'5 Frogs on a log'
Artwork by 4-year-old

Research has shown that starting a quality kindergarten program at an earlier age leads to even more positive effects on child development. That's why at Linda Brown Preschool we offer families the opportunity to enrol their child to attend our 3-year-old program. It is designed to support children's growing development and for them to learn key skills for life. They include creative thinking, social and emotional skills, and early literacy and language skills. We provide a high-quality play-based learning program as it is a powerful way to support learning and development. 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 4.

All children attending 3-year-old kindergarten must have turned three prior to starting.

VEYLDF Practice Principles	VEYLDF Learning Outcomes	Developmental Milestones Domains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practice • Partnerships with families • High expectations for every child • Respectful relationships and responsive engagement • Equity and diversity • Assessment for learning and development • Integrated teaching and learning approaches • Partnerships with professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome One: <i>Children have a strong sense of identity</i> • Outcome Two: <i>Children are connected to and contribute to their world</i> • Outcome Three: <i>Children have a strong sense of wellbeing</i> • Outcome Four: <i>Children are confident and involved learners</i> • Outcome Five: <i>Children are effective communicators</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional • Social • Physical • Cognitive • Language

STORYPARK

We use Storypark as our online platform to communicate with families and to share children's experiences at kindergarten. Storypark is an easy-to-use, private online service that helps teachers, parents and families work together to record, share and extend your child's learning.

Storypark allows a child's learning journey to be documented in a way that allows you to become involved and kept up-to-date with your child's learning and development throughout their kindergarten year.

Monthly newsletters will be regularly distributed via Storypark. Our newsletters contain important information and news about upcoming events, fundraising opportunities and other important dates.

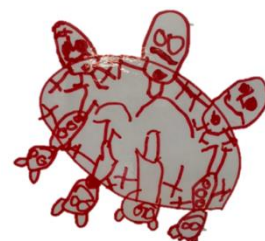
Please ensure that you have 'notifications' turned on and take the time to read our newsletters as we are trying to reduce our ecological footprint and will only be sending newsletters and notices electronically via Storypark. A copy of the newsletter can also be found in our notice board, along with other information.

In November 2023, we will begin sharing vital information about orientation, to support your child's transition in to their new learning environment, please ensure that you check Storypark and keep up-to-date.

ORIENTATION AND SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO SETTLE INTO KINDER

We understand 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, children, routines and expectations may be overwhelming. We want to ensure that each child's transition to our kindergarten is a happy and positive experience. Here are some tips that will support a positive transition.

- **Visit the kindergarten** – Keep an eye out on Storypark, as we will be sharing up to date information with you about orientation visits and how we plan to support you and your child. You could also drive past the kindergarten and point it out to your child.
- **Talk about kindergarten** – You can talk about the things your child will do at kindergarten. You could look at photos of the kindergarten and watch the videos we will share on Storypark. Talk about some of the things that are different from home, like the toilets and playground. Let your child know that educators are there to help them. Practice opening lunch boxes and containers. Encourage your child to practice packing their kindergarten bag. If your child doesn't seem interested when you talk about kindergarten, don't push the conversation. Keeping things low key can be a good idea too. If you say things like, 'Isn't it exciting that you're starting kindergarten?', your child might start to feel more anxious because it sounds like a big deal.
- **Read books about preschool** – Here are some good books for children about starting preschool:
 - First day by Margaret Wild
 - I love you all day long by Francesca Rusackas
 - Maisy goes to preschool by Lucy Cousins
 - Tom goes to kindergarten by Margaret Wild
 - What to expect at preschool by Heidi Murkoff
- **When your child starts kindergarten** – If your child is attending long day sessions and you feel as though they may be a bit too much at the beginning, they are welcome to attend for shorter periods of time and gradually increase their hours of attendance, in the first few weeks. If you feel that your child



'Children sitting around the mat together'

may need additional support to transition positively, please speak with your child's teacher to discuss their individual needs.

We will be sharing additional information surrounding orientation and how to support your child to positively transition to kindergarten on Storypark. Please take the time to read our updates, as it will include videos, photos and information that may be useful.

RISK MANAGEMENT / COMMUNICATION PLAN INTERVIEWS

Parents/guardians of each 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 be required to attend a meeting. If necessary, a member of our teaching team will make contact with you based on the information provided on your child's confidential enrolment form and schedule a meeting for either late November or early December, 2023.

WHAT TO BRING TO KINDERGARTEN EACH DAY

- **Kinder bag** – Large enough to hold children's artwork, lunchbox and spare clothing
- **Broad-brim sun hat** – Children and staff are required to wear a hat, when accessing the outdoor environment, from mid-August to the end of April, in accordance with our [Sun Protection Policy](#)
- **Roll-on sunscreen** – Due to the increase of children having skin allergies, we recommend that you pack a suitable roll-on sunscreen for them.
- **Warm coat and beanie** – During the winter months, we still access the outdoors. You are welcome to wear gumboots while outdoors and then change into slippers when we are indoors!
- **Water Bottle** – Filled with water ONLY
- **A packed lunch** – Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea (Long day sessions ONLY)
- **Spare set of clothing** – Underwear, shorts/pants, t-shirt, jumper and socks, as sometimes we get dirty/wet in the outdoors!

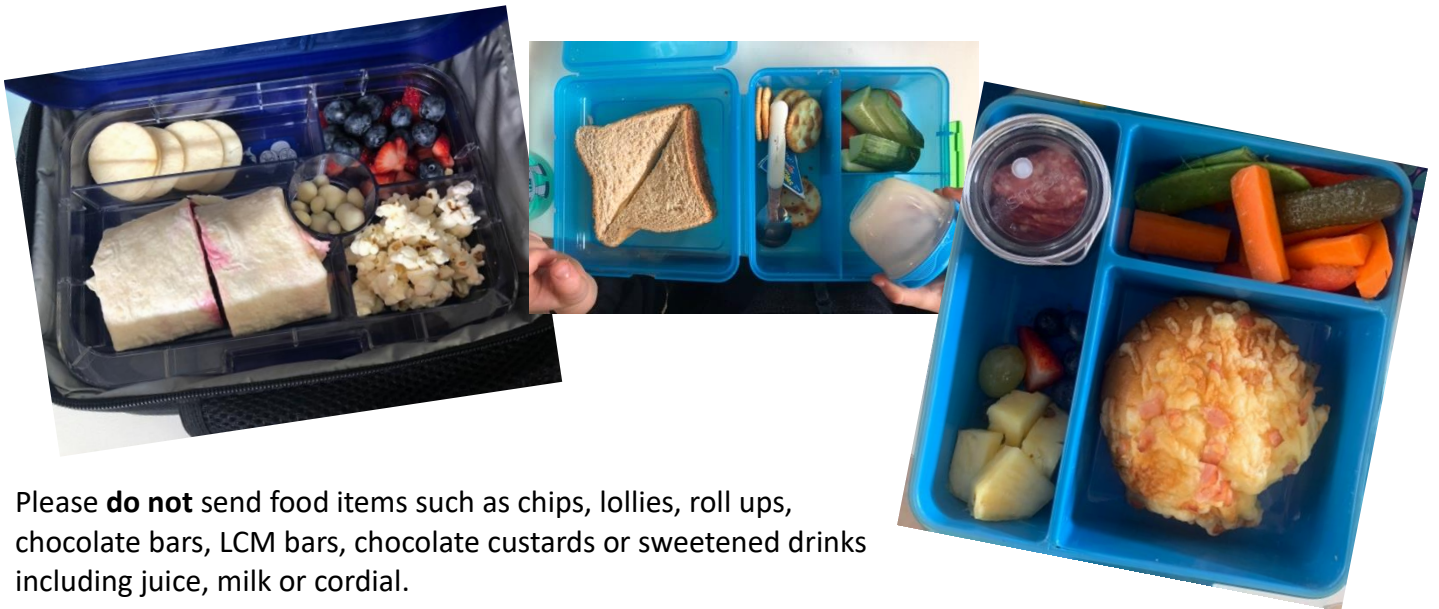
Please ensure all belongings are clearly named and that you place ice packs in lunch containers as required.

HEALTHY FOODS

Linda Brown Preschool is a proud participant in 'Smiles4Miles' dental health program and the 'Achievement Program'. Following our [Nutrition Policy](#) and with guidance from Smiles4Miles and the Achievement Program, we encourage you to send only nutritious foods to kindergarten. These may include:

Sandwiches, rolls or wraps with healthy fillings (i.e., meat, salads, vegetables, vegemite, cheese)

- Dry biscuits and cheese/dips
- Yoghurt/Fruit tubs (Don't forget to pack a spoon!)
- Low sugar muffins, muesli bars, rice cakes, rice crackers
- Fruit, vegetable sticks, pasta, rice, sushi
- Plain popcorn



Please **do not** send food items such as chips, lollies, roll ups, chocolate bars, LCM bars, chocolate custards or sweetened drinks including juice, milk or cordial.

Please **do not** fill sandwiches with jam, honey or sprinkles.

We also ask that you **do not** send any foods containing nuts. This includes peanut butter and Nutella. **We are a nut-free service.**

As part of our Anaphylaxis Policy, if we have children attending the kindergarten 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 and throughout the year.

We respect that it is the parents' choice as to what food is packed in your child's lunchbox, however we ask that you are mindful of our Nutrition Policy. A copy of our Nutrition Policy can be found on the ECKA website.

The kindergarten is a Non-Smoking, Drug Free and Alcohol-Free Environment.

CLOTHING

WARNING: We get dirty!!

During their time at kindergarten, children are encouraged to engage in a range of activities. All of the children's learning is hands on, and even though they wear smocks for creative and messy experiences, they will still manage to get dirty! Please send your child in clothes you don't mind getting dirty or marked.

We do offer a uniform; however, this is not compulsory. Uniform pieces can be purchased through Hip Pocket Work Wear, Howitt Street Wendouree. An order form can be found in your pack.

Children need to wear solid, enclosed, non-slip footwear that enables them to run, climb and balance outdoors. Shoes such as slip-ons, sandals and thongs are not suitable.

Our Sun Protection Policy requires all children and staff to wear a sun hat from mid-August to the end of April, even if the weather is overcast and cool. Please ensure that your child wears clothing with a sleeve, covering the shoulders. No singlet tops or sleeveless dresses.

Children will be asked to play 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.

PARENT & FRIENDS GROUP

The Parent & Friends Group is made up of parents/guardians and other members of the community. The group meets once a term to plan fundraising and social events. Everyone is welcome to attend and we appreciate everyone's ideas and contributions. Being a part of our Parent & Friends Group is a great way to be involved with the kindergarten and your child's learning. It is also a great opportunity to meet other parents/guardians using our termly meeting as a fun social outing.



'Use our manners' – Artwork by 4-year-old

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.



'Daffodils' – Artwork by 3-year-old

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

Arrival and Departures – We kindly ask that you supervise your child during arrival and while departing the kindergarten. On arrival, you will be greeted by a member of your child's teaching team. Children will be dismissed by their teacher at the end of the day. Your child will be asked to remain seated on the mat until their name is called. Please ensure that you leave the service and make your way to your car safely, holding your child's hand. Teaching staff endeavour to keep arrivals and departures as orderly as possible to ensure the safety of each child. The entry door will be secured after the commencement of sessions. Please ring the doorbell for entry during session times.

Please ensure that you collect your child at the correct time at the end of each session. Children can become anxious or upset when they are left and everyone else has gone home. If you know that you are going to be late, please phone the kindergarten.

Please do not hold doors and gates ajar or let unaccompanied children out of the service.

Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Medical Conditions – If your child has been diagnosed with Asthma, Anaphylaxis and/or a medical condition, the teaching team will arrange a meeting with you to develop a 'Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan' prior to your child commencing kindergarten. Action Plans/Management Plans signed by a doctor and medications needed, must be provided to the kindergarten for those children who have a diagnosis. Please alert staff if your child is diagnosed with an illness or allergy at any time throughout the kindergarten year.

If your child requires medication whilst at kindergarten, a medication authorisation sheet must be completed and signed by the parent. Staff can only administer medications that are clearly labelled with the child's name, are in the original container, have a prescribed dose and are in-date. All medications must be handed to teaching staff at the beginning of the day. Please do not leave medicines in your child's bag.

Any accidents or injuries that occur to your child while at the kindergarten will be recorded in the 'Accident & Illness' Book.

Parents will be notified either at the time of the accident or at the end of the session, depending on the severity of the injury. Parents will be asked to sight and sign the written record.

Authority to collect – Children will only be dismissed to adults who are listed on your child's enrolment form with 'Authority to collect' and who are written in the sign-in book, at the beginning of the day. If an adult arrives at the kindergarten and isn't written down as the person collecting, we will have to make contact with whoever did the initial drop off to confirm that the person who has arrived to collect the child, has authority to collect. If for some reason the person collecting may change during the day, please contact the kindergarten to inform them of the change of person. If we don't answer the phone, please leave a message. You may add people at any time during the year, however we just ask that the person collecting presents their Photo ID on arrival.

Birthdays – Birthdays are special and we love to celebrate with your child by singing 'Happy Birthday'. You may wish to provide a special treat for your child to share with their group. Individual cupcakes are perfect! We ask that you arrive at the kindergarten 15 minutes before the end of the kindergarten session to join in the singing and to help your child hand out the special treats at the door. Any parents not wanting their child to receive a special treat will be able to decline.

To save children's feelings, we ask that you do not hand out birthday invitations in the kindergarten. Please hand them to other parents at arrival or departure.

Bringing toys to kindergarten – 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.

Daily kindergarten routine – At the beginning of the kindergarten year, the teaching team will share with you (via Storypark) our daily kindergarten routine. This will provide you with insight of what your child will engage in throughout their day at kindergarten.

Enrolment Forms, Documents and Immunisation Statement – Before your child commences kindergarten, we ask that you complete the online confidential enrolment form and return all signed documents to the kindergarten. The enrolment process cannot be completed until we have been provided with an up-to-date immunisation statement. This document can be accessed via the 'mygov' website and we ask that you



email us a PDF copy at your earliest convenience. Please ensure that your child's details are kept up-to-date throughout the year.

Excursions – (4-year-old Groups Only) – Excursions into the community and incursions at the kindergarten are an exciting and important element of our curriculum. As such, they are arranged throughout the year, according to the curriculum content and the interests and abilities of the children. We require written permission and may require some parental assistance for excursions and you will receive prior notification about any excursion or special event that is planned.

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

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 are specialised in early childhood education and development and are able to support parents in their role. Referrals to other professionals (i.e., 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.

Newsletters – As mentioned earlier, monthly newsletters will be regularly distributed via Storypark. Our newsletters contain important information and news about upcoming events, fundraising opportunities and other important dates. Please ensure you take the time to read them as they do contain vital information.

Phone calls – There are times when you may need to contact us during the day. Just be aware that we may not be able to answer the phone, as we are busy with the children. However, please leave a message with your name and number and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, if the matter isn't urgent, you can always email us or send a private message to your child's teacher on Storypark.

Policies – A copy of the kindergarten's policies are available to view on the ECKA website.

Polices include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fee information• Behaviour Guidance• Complaints Procedures• Delivery and Collection of Children• Enrolment• Excursions• Chemical Hazards• Toileting• Illness and Emergency Care• Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hygiene and Food Safety• Head Lice• OHS• Non-Smoking Policy• Inclusion of children with additional needs• Privacy Guidelines• Sun Protection• Technology Use• Qualified Staff• Parental Involvement
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We are very grateful for the opportunity to provide a kindergarten program to you and your children.

We look forward to an exciting and productive year and thank you for entrusting your child's education to us.

