



Family Information Booklet 2024

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

WELCOME TO MIDLANDS KINDERGARTEN

We would like to welcome you to Midlands Kindergarten. Midlands Kindergarten is a community of learners where children are encouraged to develop a strong self-image and a love of learning. We look forward to sharing the journey with you all. The following information is to help you understand what will be happening at the kindergarten during the year. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to ask a staff to assist you.

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 Years (3yo groups)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		
Group B	9:00 – 2:00			9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00
Group C		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	
Group D	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00			9:00 – 2:00
Group E			9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00

2nd Years (4yo groups)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Bunjil Black	8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00			
Bunjil Red	8:30 – 4:00		8:30 – 4:00		
Bunjil Orange		8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00		
Wurrak				8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00

KEY DATES FOR 2024

MONDAY 29th JANUARY	Staff Professional Development Day
TUESDAY 30th JANUARY	Set Up and Team Inductions Day
WEDNESDAY 31st JANUARY	Staff Planning Day
THURSDAY 1st FEBRUARY	Between The Flags Professional Development Day
FRIDAY 2nd FEBRUARY	Interview Day – Bunjil, Wurrak, Murran
MONDAY 5th FEBRUARY	Interview Day – Bunji, Wurrak, Murran
TUESDAY 6th FEBRUARY	Interview Day -Murran Bujil Black and Bunjil Orange (half group) - Half Day
WEDNESDAY 7th FEBRUARY	Bujil Red and Bunjil Orange (half group) - Half Day Murran (1/3 group) - Full Day
THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY	Wurrak (half group) - Half Day Murran (1/3 group) - Full Day
FRIDAY 9th FEBRUARY	Wurrak (half group) - Full Day Murran (1/3 group) - Full Day
MONDAY 12th FEBRUARY	All groups full days.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR CHILDREN

The educators at Midlands Kindergarten endeavour to create and maintain a high standard of quality relationships and interactions with children, their families and other professionals. Our aim is to provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment with responsive and caring educators, in order to allow the children to feel safe and secure. The educators get to know each child by being responsive to their strengths, interests and abilities; they value and build on these skills to provide motivation and learning.

All learning takes place through a play based program that allows each child to self-select their play experiences. When children are playing, they make progress and demonstrate their learning across the five learning outcomes. The outcomes are designed to capture the learning and development of all children.

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

The above learning outcomes are our guide to ensure that all children are engaging in a range of experiences in ways that optimize their learning. Teaching styles used are: Shared learning between the family, child and educator; Spontaneous teaching guided and initiated by the child; and intentional teaching that is purposeful and thoughtful, such as: modelling, explanations, questioning, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving. The children's interactions with other children and guidance from staff members assist them in becoming successful learners. Imaginary and role-play assists their social and emotional development. Literacy and numeracy is merged into the daily program and routines. We also encourage the children to be responsible for their own actions, and to respect and care for each other. Self-esteem, confidence and resilience will develop when attempting challenges through practice and effort, with staff guidance and support to extend learning and new skills.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To comply with the National Quality Standard, all parents/authorised persons leaving children at kindergarten must sign the daily attendance book. Again, when departing, the attendance book must be signed by the person collecting your child.

Staff must be notified if someone else is to pick up your child. That person's name must be included on your enrolment form as a person authorised to collect your child from kindergarten.

We like to greet you both on arrival, so please come in, settle your child, and say 'goodbye' to them before leaving.

When the session is over, parents are required to come in to the kindergarten to pick up children.

If you are going to be late, please call us so that we may reassure your child. Please keep in mind that staff are not responsible for children before or after the session.

The gates are to always remain closed. Only let your child out the gate. Please do not allow children to climb or swing on the gates

ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

Please note that if at any stage during the year your address, telephone number or emergency contacts alter in any way, we need to know immediately. It is vital that our records are kept up to date at all times, just in case we need to contact you in an emergency.

A detailed enrolment policy is kept in the Midlands Policy Folder, located in the foyer of the kindergarten or on the ECKA website.

FEES

As part of the Victorian Government's *Best Start, Best Life* reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free in 2024. This means there will be no fees payable by parents. For more information on the Best Start, Best Life reform please visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/kinder>

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

During the beginning of the year we also invite parents to come along to **Parent/ Teacher meetings** to have an opportunity to discuss their child's learning.

The Parent and Friends Activity Group will also send out newsletters via Storypark (at least one per term) to keep you informed of upcoming events, special occasions and anything else that is of relevance to the smooth operation of the kindergarten.

STORYPARK

You will be kept in touch about the program and the progress of your child's learning throughout each term through an online network called Storypark. At the beginning of the year you will receive an email alert to join the online community. Once you accept the email invitation from your child's teacher you'll be taken to a sign-up page where you can enter your name and choose a password. Storypark is an online service, so you can log in without installing software on your computer. Parents, teachers and family can write stories and comments, add pictures and videos and select the children who feature. Published stories will show up in your child's profile. Family members who you have invited will get an email to say a new story has been added.

THE HEALTH OF YOUR CHILD

It is vital for you to inform us if your child suffers from any allergies, asthma or any other condition.

MEDICATION

Should your child require medication during a session, it needs to be written into the medication book by a parent. We cannot administer it without your consent. The medication must be given to a staff member who will put it in the appropriate place. Never leave medication in your child's bag, including asthma medication. We do not go through your child's bag, so please do not assume that we will find it. Leaving it there could be hazardous to your own child, as well as to other children.

When filling out the medication form, please write all the details of the medication, when it was last administered and the time for administering the exact quantity of the next dose. When we administer the medication, we will fill in the relevant details, such as: time, dosage, which staff member administered the medication, and the staff member's signature.

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma, or any other allergy, you are required to provide the kindergarten staff with a current management plan, signed by your doctor.

ACCIDENT, ILLNESS, TRAUMA, INCIDENT BOOK

The kinder must maintain adequate records with regard to accidents, injuries, trauma and illness. A staff member will enter any such occurrences into this book and will require you to sign that you have been informed, after reading what has happened and the course of action taken.

Staff will normally highlight the child's name in the attendance book, as a reminder for parents to read and sign the accident form.



CLOTHING

Please dress your child/ren in comfortable and practical clothing. Long dresses can cause accidents on climbing equipment and belts on jeans/trousers can delay a child who may be in a rush to go to the toilet. All children like to take their shoes off in the sandpit; therefore, shoes need to be easy for both children and staff to put back on. To avoid injury to toes, we recommend that your child wears appropriate footwear. At the start of the kindergarten year, we will provide each child with a hat. The hat will be labelled with your child's name and stored separately in lockers. A warm coat should be brought in winter. Gumboots and slippers are optional.

WHAT TO BRING TO EACH SESSION

In your child's bag each session, we would like you to include the following:

- A change of clothes for any little accidents that can happen as even with a smock on, they can still manage to get wet.
- A healthy morning snack of fruit/vegetables or cheese/dry biscuits. This needs to be placed on the trolley inside the kinder room.
- A healthy lunch placed on trolley.
- For Bunjil/Garrang/Murran group (the longer sessions), will also need a healthy afternoon snack in separate container of fruit/vegetables, cheese/dry biscuits.
- A bottle of water (no juice please) clearly labelled with your child's name on it so that your child can access it at any time during the day. Your child's drink bottle needs to be taken home each session.
- Other groups use the trolley so we need the space and fresh water needs to be provided each session.

SMILES FOR MILES PROGRAM

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

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



The program is based on the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools Framework and is delivered predominantly in kindergartens. In 2013, Smiles 4 miles reached over 28,000 children and their families across 480 early childhood education and care services around Victoria.

The key messages promoted in the program are:

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

MEALS AND DRINKS

During a Kinder session;

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

As we encourage children to make healthy food choices, we ask that snacks or lunches that are high in sugar, fat or salt are encouraged not to be brought to kinder e.g.:

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

SUNSMART



To ensure that we remain SunSmart, children are required to wear:

A broad brimmed Hat: During term 1 and 4, and when the UV rating is 3 or above.

Sunscreen: This should be applied by parents/carers before each session from September to April or when the UV is 3 and above. Sunscreen will be available at the service if required. It is recommended for children with skin allergies to bring their own sunscreen.

Sun smart clothing: in summer, for example, dresses with sleeves, not straps, in order to avoid exposure to the sun; and warm clothing during the autumn/winter months.

EXCURSIONS/INCURSIONS

Parents will be notified of excursion destination, mode of transport, the legally required adult-child ratio and other relevant details. Parents will be asked to sign a permission form for each excursion.

All excursions are strictly supervised by the Kindergarten Educators at all times, in accordance with Early Education and Care regulations.

Parent assistance is often required on excursions, but depending on the nature of the excursion it is not always possible to allow siblings to accompany parents.

Parents will be notified on these occasions.



TOILETING

We encourage all children to toilet independently. However, we recognise that all children are not ready to do this at the same time. Please provide nappies or pull ups if your child requires these and/or several changes of clothes (including shoes) if your child is just beginning to toilet train. Staff are happy to support all efforts to assist families in this process. Please discuss with staff your child's needs.

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.

After the children have settled in we will commence a "stay and play" roster for those families who would like to participate in the program.

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.

BIRTHDAYS



We love to celebrate children's birthdays and we choose to bake the child's chosen cake at kinder. This makes it really special we can tailor cake recipes that meet all dietary/medical requirements. Please note that Midlands Kindergarten is aiming to be a nut free zone in order to protect children who have been diagnosed with nut allergies.

ILLNESS

If your child is ill in any way, we prefer that s/he be kept at home. This is for the child's own sake, as well as to prevent the spread of infection to other children and staff members in the group. We do appreciate your consideration in doing this.

PHOTOGRAPHING AND VIDEOS

If you are intending to photograph or video your child during a session, excursion, party or a concert, please ask a staff member prior to the day for permission. Sometimes we have parents who object to their child being photographed and we need to respect this.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

This centre is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children in attendance. We believe in encouraging positive behaviour in all children and ensuring that each child is respected and valued as an individual. Our intention is to instil in the children a sense of responsibility, self worth and independence. Setting limits for behaviour is important for the safety and protection of the children, staff and parents in the environment. We aim to help the children learn the consequences of their behaviour and therefore to develop an understanding of how their actions affect others in the group. This takes a great deal of practice on behalf of the child as each child has a different level of tolerance, control and ability to cope with frustration. We focus on the behaviour and not on the child in question, and aim to assist children to acknowledge and talk about different emotions.

We look forward to teaching your child/ren and enjoying the kinder journey with them.

Appendix 1 - Exclusion Times for Communicable Diseases

Condition	Exclusion of Case	Exclusion of Contacts
Amoebiasis (Entamoeba histolytic)	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased.	Not excluded
Campylobacter	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased	Not excluded
Chickenpox	Exclude until full recovered or for at least 5 days after the eruption first appears. Note that some remaining scabs are not a reason for continued exclusion.	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.	Not excluded
CMV (Cytomegalovirus infection)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least 2 negative throat swabs, the first swab not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics followed by another swab 48 hours later.	Exclude contacts that live in the same house until cleared to return by an appropriate health authority.
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased or until medical certificate of recovery is produced.	Not excluded
Glandular Fever	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Haemophilus type b (Hib)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received	Not excluded
Hand, Foot & Mouth disease	Until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	Not excluded
Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, while possible	Not excluded
Hookworm	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS virus)	Exclusion is not necessary unless the child has a secondary infection	Not excluded
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza type illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded
Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	Not excluded
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash. Immunised contacts not excluded.	Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of their first case they may return to school.
Meningitis	Exclude until well	Not excluded
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed.	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy
Molluscum contagiosum	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
Parvovirus (erythema infectiosum fifth disease)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
Poliomyelitis	Exclusion for at least 14 days from onset. Readmit after receiving medical certificate of Recovery.	Not excluded
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Re-admit the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.	Not excluded
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	Not excluded
Salmonella, Shigella	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Streptococcal infection (including Scarlet fever)	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious.	Not excluded
Trachoma	Re-admit the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	Not excluded
Tuberculosis	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	Not excluded
Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary	
Whooping Cough	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment	Exclude unimmunised household contacts aged less than 7 years and close child care contacts for 14 days after the last exposure to infection or until they have taken 5 days of a 10-day course of antibiotics
Worms (Intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea presents	Not excluded