



# Family Information Booklet 2025

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 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 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.



**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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## 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

### 1st Years (3yo groups)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Murran	8:45 – 4:15		8:45 – 4:15		
Garrang		8:45 – 4:15		8:45 – 4:15	

### 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 2025

TUESDAY 28th JANUARY	Staff Professional Development Day
WEDNESDAY 29th JANUARY	Set Up and Team Inductions Day
THURSDAY 30 <sup>th</sup> JANUARY	Interview Day
FRIDAY 31 <sup>st</sup> JANUARY	Interview Day
MONDAY 3 <sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY	Staff Planning Day
TUESDAY 4th FEBRUARY	<b>Wurrak Group – 8.30am – 4pm</b> <b>Garrang Group A – 8.45am – 12.15pm</b> <b>Garrang Group B – 12.45pm – 4pm</b>
WEDNESDAY 5th FEBRUARY	<b>Bunjil Black - 8.30am – 4pm</b> <b>Murrn Group A – 8.45am – 12.15pm</b> <b>Murrn Group B – 1.45pm – 4.15pm</b>
THURSDAY 6th FEBRUARY	<b>Bunjil Orange 8.30am – 4pm</b> <b>Garrang – Group B – 8.45am – 12.15pm</b> <b>Garrang Group A – 12.45am – 4pm</b>
FRIDAY 7th FEBRUARY	<b>Bunjil Red 8.30am – 4pm</b>
MONDAY 10th 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 are 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 on the ECKA website.

## FEEES

As part of the Victorian Government's *Best Start, Best Life* reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free in 2025. 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

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

Throughout the year we will be communicating with families through regular chats, Storypark and other methods as appropriate. We welcome families to initiate conversations with us all the time.

## 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. Prior to your child beginning kinder we will invite you 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.
- A healthy morning/afternoon brain 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.
- Nutrigrain 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.

**SunSmart 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/ CENTRE EVENTS

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 individual needs.

If your child isn't toilet trained, we will need to sit down with you to complete a 'toileting plan'.

**Note: ALL CHILDREN, IRRESPECTIVE OF TOILETING NEEDS ARE REQUIRED TO PACK MULTIPLE SPARE CLOTHES.**

## 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

To be inclusive and respectful of everyone we feel as a team that we would like to celebrate each child's birthday uniquely in different ways. We will engage with families about how you would like to celebrate your child's birthday due to our diverse community.



## 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.

Within a small community such as a kindergarten, colds, tonsillitis, vomiting and diarrhea, chicken pox etc are easily transmitted. Please keep your child at home if they are unwell and please notify us if your child is going to be away. The staff will not hesitate to call parents (or those listed on the enrolment form) if a child is not well at kinder, or if an injury occurs. Please inform staff if your child has been unwell. Children with live lice and nits must not come to kinder. Please inform staff if your child has been treated for nits so that families can be informed to be extra vigilant. This table will be displayed at the kindergarten or found at

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases-guidelines-and-advice>

If children require medication or have specific medical needs, please ensure that the relevant information is handed to staff.

Medication will only be given to children after the parent has filled in the Medication Book. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name and dosage clearly marked. Under no circumstances should medication of any kind be left in your child's bag.

## 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.

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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

We understand that life can be challenging sometimes. 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. Perhaps we could offer some suggestions or support in some way. E.g. To Help to navigate some big feelings for your child or suggest some child-friendly stories for a suitable topic.

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