



Learning Through Play

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 MT CLEAR COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN

Staff welcome your association with Mt Clear Community Kindergarten.

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. It is a place where you can share positive experiences with your child, his/her peers and their families.

We welcome your support in maintaining a high standard of educational programming, pleasant and safe facilities and active participation in the kindergarten.

We are a healthy early childhood service and a member of the Achievement program, which is supported by the Victorian Government and Cancer Council Victoria. All staff are skilled in the delivery of the key areas in *Sun Protection, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Healthy Eating and Oral Health, Safe Environments, Physical Activity and Movement and Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs.*

We look forward to our Kindergarten year together and hope it's a happy and productive one.



Enriching children's lives through learning

Our Kindergarten is proudly managed by ECKA Inc. ECKA is called the Approved Provider and is responsible for all aspects of the management of the preschool including employment of staff. Information about ECKA can be found at www.ecka.org.au and you will receive an ECKA policy and procedure booklet when you commence.

ECKA is a not-for-profit community based Early Years Management Service for kindergartens and early childhood care services in Ballarat and surrounding areas, proudly managing 29 services. While all kindergartens operate within Legislative guidelines, each kindergarten operate an individual program to meet the needs of the children and families attending their service. ECKA values the role the kindergarten in building local support networks with families, often contributing to lifelong friendships between the families and children who have shared their kinder years together.

Our Purpose

Enriching children's lives through learning.

Our Values

Respect • Courage • Collaboration • Compassion

Our Guiding Principle

In order to deliver on 'Our Purpose', ECKA is committed to being a sustainable organisation that maximises its impact on the lives of children.

We commit to:

- Provision of high-quality education and care services that enhance the learning and development of all children
- Advocating for children and the early education and care sector – being an influential voice for high quality early years services
- Planning and partnering for effective, sustainable and supported early years services both now and in the future.

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 (3yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Waa	8:45 – 1:45	8:45 – 1:45	8:45 – 1:45		

2nd Years (4yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wombat Red		8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00		
Wombat Green			8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00	
Wombat Blue		8:30 – 4:00		8:30 – 4:00	
Wombat Purple		8:30 – 1:30	8:30 – 1:30	8:30 – 1:30	

OUR HISTORY

In 1972 a meeting was held to discuss the possible formation of a kindergarten at Mt. Clear.

A survey showed the number of children requiring Kindergarten education in this area certainly warranted a centre.

It was originally approved to allot Crown Land in Recreation Road for the Centre, however, the Committee proposed to develop the Kindergarten on the Church of Christ site in Dallas Avenue.

In late 1976 the once 'Fish and Chip' shop, then Church of Christ Child Minding Centre, was renovated enough to commence Kindergarten in February of 1977.

In 1987 the proposal to add a foyer, kitchen and Child Health Care Centre was approved.

The Kindergarten has been steadily improved by vital fundraising by its Committee and support in the early years by the former Buninyong Shire Council.

In 2013 the kindergarten received a major renovation, with the Maternal and Child Health Centre being converted into a second kindergarten room.

OUR STAFF

Employment of staff within the Mt. Clear Community Kindergarten is the responsibility of the Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.

The staff employed at the kindergarten are responsible for the planning and implementation of the three and four-year-old programs. They are required and supported to have a continuing professional development plan.

All staff employed at the kindergarten must have VIT registration (teachers only) and working with children check, a current first aid certificate and have specialist training in CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis.

Voluntary workers/students assist at times.

KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

The aim of kindergarten education is to learn through play. The value of play for the child gives him/her the opportunity in their own way, and in their own time to come to grips with problems and find solutions. It is the method through which the child builds upon basic attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Play is a child's work!

Kindergarten provides a happy relaxed atmosphere in which your child will:

- (a) Increase his/her self-esteem, confidence and ability to cope with new situations.
- (b) Build relationships with adults and children.
- (c) Be encouraged to make his/her own decisions.
- (d) Develop a sense of achievement.
- (e) Learn to accept strong feelings and channel them into acceptable outlets.
- (f) Further develop his/her co-ordination and maintain physical health.
- (g) Gain knowledge about him/herself and the world around him/her.
- (h) Enjoy being him/herself while learning to function within a group.

The Kindergarten program is flexible, focusing on the development of the whole child. Parent involvement is an integral part of this program. Your participation in the children's activities strengthens the link between home and kindergarten and fosters positive learning in your child. The role of Early Childhood Education could be viewed in this way:

The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done, men and women who are creative and inventive and will be discoverers." - Piaget (Swiss educator) in the role of Education

VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Department of Education and Early Childhood and the Victorian Curriculum and

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

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

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

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

FOOD

SNACK:

Each child is asked to bring a healthy snack each day to Kindergarten. A healthy snack should include fruit, vegetables, cheese, hard-boiled eggs or dried fruit. We recommend no processed or packaged food.



LUNCH:

Lunch is to include a sandwich/roll/dry biscuit in addition to fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt. We recommend no processed or packaged food.

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

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

ARRIVAL:

Please note the appropriate starting times for your child's sessions at kinder.

You are asked not to bring children earlier as staff are preparing for the session. We like to greet the children as they come in, so we would appreciate if you could wait in the foyer until starting time. This is also a time for you to chat with other families and get to know each other better.

SIGN IN:

When dropping off and picking up children, it is **essential** for the Record Book to be signed and the exact time of drop off and pick up recorded. You should also indicate if a person other than yourself will be picking up your child or any other children that you have dropped off. **An adult must collect and drop off kindergarten children.**

Please note the appropriate finishing times for your child's sessions at kinder.

DEPARTURE

If someone else is to collect your child, please inform staff so your child can be prepared, and also for security. All persons collecting children must be indicated on your child's enrolment form. Children **will not** be released to persons unauthorised by the parent/guardian(s).

ALLERGIES

Please note that some foods may be prohibited if a child at risk of Anaphylaxis is enrolled at the Kindergarten.

LAUNDRY

Families are asked to volunteer to wash smocks, tea towels and dress-ups on a weekly basis.

BELONGINGS

Bringing toys from home is discouraged as children sometimes lose them or they get damaged, causing undue stress for the child. All children are required to bring a kinder bag.

Each child will be given a locker to house their belongings (coats, hats, bags etc.) Please name your child's belongings.

BIRTHDAYS

On your child's birthday, you might like to bring a cake to share. Small cupcakes prove to be popular and easy to eat. Please feel free to stay for your child's special day. All birthday invitations/ cards are to be placed in the children's pockets in the foyer. Other alternatives to cakes include bubbles, stickers, party knick-knacks.

CLOTHING

It is best to wear play clothes for comfort and practicality, as the children will get dirty as they participate fully in the Kindergarten program and all areas of play. In winter, please provide coats and hats. We try to go outside as often as possible.

From September through to the end of April hats need to be worn. Sunscreen is also provided in the foyer for parents to ensure their children are protected and is re-applied as necessary.

No singlet tops or sleeveless dresses please! We are a Sun Smart Centre.

A spare set of clothing is useful in your child's kindergarten bag. Children prefer to put on their own clothes if accidents occur.



FOOTWEAR

Shoes should be worn to and from Kindergarten. Thongs are not permitted as they can become entangled in the climbing frames and the children can suffer injury.

Shoes should have a good grip. Joggers, sandals and lace-up shoes are recommended.

KINDERGARTEN UNIFORMS

Kindergarten windcheaters, polo shirts and hats are available for purchase from Impact Teamwear 147 Learmonth Street Alfredton. They are optional. Please check directly with the supplier for orders and costs. Order forms are available on Storypark in the 'About Section'.

SMOCKS

These are provided by the Kindergarten.

PROGRAM

The Kindergarten program is available for parents to view in the Kindergarten foyer and on Storypark. It outlines planned learning activities using the five outcomes described in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Parents are welcome to contribute & provide input throughout the year.

TRANSITION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS

In 2009 'Transition to Learning and Development Statements' were introduced as a tool for families and educators to share information about a child's learning and development with the school they will be going to. Every child who is going to school next year will have a transition statement to pass on to the school. The transition statements provide opportunities for families and children to make comment on the child's learning and development and information they think might help the child's transition to school. Early childhood staff are required to provide information based on the five outcomes of the VEYLDF referred to above. The statement can only be forwarded to a school when the parent/guardian consent has been provided. Statements are completed in October/November to be passed onto schools in November. Parents are always welcome to speak to the Teacher in regard to their child's progress. You are asked to make an appointment with the Teacher to do this at a mutually convenient time. Please be assured that the Teacher will approach you, as parents, if she has any concerns at all regarding any matters to do with your child.

MEDICATION

There is a Medication and Accident book that is required to be filled in when needed. Please note that all medication sent to the kinder must be in the original container and in date. Only a parent/guardian can sign the related documentation to have medication administered to a child unless you have nominated others on your enrolment form. If a parent is needed to sign a form, or information needs to be shared with families, your child's name will be highlighted in the sign-in book.

IMMUNISATION

A child must be up to date with vaccinations for their age or on a catch-up schedule or have a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated. Enrolment cannot be finalised until the kindergarten is provided with an immunisation status certificate.



ILLNESS

If your child is ill, we ask that you keep them home. Often at this age, children are still developing the skills to independently care for their own hygiene, including covering their cough, blowing their nose and remembering to wash their hands. This makes the environment high risk for all those around them. If you are keeping your child home for any reason, we ask that you notify the kindergarten. This assists with tracking of infectious diseases and illnesses.

NOTICEBOARD

Please read the noticeboard from time to time. Information in regard to community events will be posted there and on Storypark.

EXCURSION

The Teacher will always notify parents if children are to be taken on an excursion. Parents will be asked to sign an authorisation form for your child to attend. Smoking is not permitted on excursions. Families will be notified if toddlers can/cannot attend excursions.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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

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

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

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

RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

From time to time, staff will ask for "recyclable materials" (e.g. paper, cardboard, wood, boxes, lids, ribbons, wool, household items, etc.) These are used by the children in their learning.

VOLUNTEER SIGN IN BOOK

Parents/Volunteers are required to sign the Volunteer Sign-In Book when they are helping out at kinder. The book is kept in the foyer.

STORYPARK

Mt Clear Community Kindergarten uses Storypark (a private Communication App) for all current 3 and 4-year-old families as a way of sharing Kindergarten news and events, reminders and community information as well as sharing your child's learning journey.

We ask that you use Storypark respectfully. It is not a space for venting or sending community posts without asking staff first. It is not a space for advertising your business or selling products! It is very much a space for sharing in the joy of your child's learning and development and advertising Kinder notices and events.

Here at Mt Clear we like to cultivate transparency and openness and encourage feedback about how the service can improve. A climate of openness allows families to feel comfortable to raise concerns in all areas and they will be taken seriously. You can do this in a number of ways;

Storypark via a private conversation tab.

email us at: mt.clear.community.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

By phone call 53301447 or by arranging an appointment