



Family Information Booklet 2025

Enriching children's
lives through learning

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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

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WELCOME TO MT PLEASANT 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.

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.

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 th March
Term 2	22 April	4 July	ANZAC Day 25 th April Kings Birthday 9 th June
Term 3	21 July	19 September	
Term 4	6 October	18 December	Melbourne Cup 4 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 2025

1st Years (3yos) & 2nd Years (4yos)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	

OUR MISSION

“To provide excellence in early childhood care and education, through learning, laughter and fun.”

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Mt Pleasant Kindergarten we wish to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land in which we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People. We recognise the continuing connection to the land, water ways and respect we shall show each day to each other, the land we play, learn and grow on.

At Mt Pleasant Kindergarten it is our belief, values, and practices to provide excellence in care and education.

We value the importance of providing meaningful learning experiences through play, where each child can feel safe, secure, and have their individual needs met. Through play children can explore, discover, and make enquiries regarding their own interests and discoveries with their learning.

We want the children to feel recognized and respected for who they are, this is reflected through the books, music, cultural representation, resources, and equipment we select for the children.

Our curriculum is rich in promoting play, through an indoor/outdoor environment, reflecting individual needs and interest of the child. Our program is complemented by the intentional teaching and spontaneous practices, individual child's interests and where parents can share the journey with their child.

Our philosophy is supported by theorists, Vygotsky views the child as learning actively when provided with hands on opportunities, which are enriched when 'scaffolded by a parent, teacher or peer'. Educators play a crucial role in supporting children's learning through the Zone of Proximal Development, knowing when to gently assist and set challenges for the child to extend their own learning and be supported through scaffolding by the parent, educator or peers.

Piaget's viewed children as learning by doing rather than by being told, Piaget viewed the child as coming into their learning with pre - established knowledge and the ability to continue to extend and grow this knowledge through new ideas and ways of completing a task further. We view children as active learners who require an environment with rich stimulation and interesting opportunities to extend and develop their own interests further. We also take away Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, made up of complex systems that challenge and support the child's development by influence from their environment. Theorist's beliefs have enabled us to look at what we value and believe and link in to how children are supported and influenced by their environment to support each child's learning style.

Through play, we believe this helps children to create, imagine and foster their learning and interests through exploring a stimulating and nurturing program. Our environment aims to reflect a home style environment of real objects and items that children would see and use in their own homes.

This learning environment helps each child to foster their own learning, through making decisions, experiment, discuss, question, hypothesis, problem solve and create freely. We encourage the children to question and seek answers through their learning alongside their peers to see their own culture and culture of their peers reflected to them through the learning environment.

Our program is supported and bound by the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework, The Victorian Child Safe Standards and ECA Code of Ethics to foster and support each child as an individual to have support with their learning journey.

Partnerships with our families are established and encourage to develop a caring and trusting relationship. We see the view the "family" as a child's first teacher and nurturer of the world they a part of, and kinder as an extension to the home narrative as a reflection to see the whole child.

We actively encourage open communication and transparency to achieve appropriate goals for the child, based on the values and beliefs of the family. By working together encourages both relationships between the kindergarten professionals and families to blossom and work together to achieve each child's maximum potential, grow with our

guidance and support. In supporting children and families in our community we place high importance on being a family centred service, where families feel valued, listened to, supported, and empowered to work together to best support their child in their pathways to learning and discovery. We strive to create an environment where the culture is celebrated, reflected through our classroom and represents our community to feel connected, belong to our service.

Our Educators believe in the value of continuing to develop their professional development and instilling new learning and ideas into the curriculum. We look for new opportunities to develop and enhance our teaching strategies and techniques to develop and provide the best opportunities for all children in our care.

We look forward to working alongside you and your child during their kinder year.



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework is designed to assist families and Early Childhood professional to guide and children's learning and development in the first eight years of life.

The framework is comprised of three areas, to describe the early years as:

Belonging: knowing where and with whom you belong is integral to human existence

Being: Childhood is not solely a preparation for adulthood or for future, recognizing the significance of the 'here and now' in children's lives

Becoming: reflecting the process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years, as you children learn and grow

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

Identity: Children have a strong sense of identity

Community: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Wellbeing: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Learning: Children are confident and involved learners

Communication: Children are effective communicators

Our Kindergarten Program

The programs are developed by our Kindergarten Teachers and Co-educators, who reflect on the children's interests and needs, both as individuals and whole groups. The program reflects our personal philosophy, valuing the importance of play-based learning and the Victorian Frameworks. We actively encourage families to share their skills within the program via their professional or personal skills such as cooking, carpentry, art/craft, or culture.

Throughout the year we have visits from our local community podiatrist, dentist, maternal child and health nurse and safe pet handling workshops for all kinder children to participate in. Community involvement from our local advisors helps assist and support the children's learning, growth and development, these



services are provided free to the kindergarten community, and we strongly encourage families to participate or allow their child to participate in these opportunities to make links within our community.

In 2024 we plan to utilize our local community, the reserve at Barkly St, community walks around the neighbourhood, linking in with Mt Pleasant Primary school to use their sensory garden and oval.

THE VALUE OF PLAY

Play is the basis of our philosophy, and we believe this is how children learn best when encouraged to problem solve, explore, develop an understanding of how to manipulate objects and materials, and to develop their own interests in their environment and learning.

Play has many characteristics, and can be described to have purpose and meaning, reflects the child's interests and needs, involves the child in numeracy and literacy concepts, develop social skills, communication, and language skills further, provides children with the opportunity to develop their imagination skills.

"When children pretend, they are using their imaginations to move beyond the bounds of reality. A stick can be a magic wand. A sock can be a puppet. A small child can be a superhero." Fred Rogers

All children will be observed and have their interests programmed for in our program, Teachers are available to discuss your child's development and progress at any time by appointment.

Our program will be influenced by the children's individual interests, supported by intentional teaching to support, and guide children further with their learning and reflect literacy and numeracy within our curriculum to assist in developing strong and confident children who show a great understanding in basic math's, writing and reading skills.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our QIP is a work in progress we add to each term, currently our service has been rated as Exceeding and has been this way for the last 3 years. We aim to keep our exceeding title and work hard to maintain it.

PARENT TEACHER DISCUSSION

There will be no formal parent teacher interview times during the year, families are strongly encouraged to request a time to talk to the teacher by phone or have a meeting at kinder, (COVID procedure to follow). Meetings allow us time to prepare, have quality time set aside to discuss concerns, develop goals and strategies to support your child or include allied support services for further assistance.

FEES

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>

BIRTHDAY CAKES



We love to celebrate birthdays at kinder. If you would like your child's birthday celebrated at kinder, please provide a store-bought cake, which has a list of ingredients attached to the packet. No nuts and no cream.

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM – SMILES 4 MILES

Our service is supported by Ballarat Community Health and our ECKA (Eureka Community Kindergarten Association) policies that support and guide our healthy eating policies at kinder.

As part of the Achievement program, we follow

- **Drink well** – tap water in our drink bottles is our preferred drink, no sugary juices, fizzy drinks or cordial.
- **Eat well** – having a variety of nutritious foods, limiting sugary foods and snacks
- **Clean well** – brushing our teeth twice a day with a low fluoride toothpaste for children, encouraging flossing and developing a good oral hygiene practice from an early age.



Morning tea: Please provide your child with a piece of fruit to contribute to our shared fruit plate in the mornings, veggie sticks, cheese and crackers or yoghurt

Lunch: Please provide a roll, wrap sandwiches, along with a snack

Water bottles: Please provide tap water only in your child's drink bottle.

Please DO Not provide your child with any NUT butters or spreads, or any nut products to be consumed at the kindergarten. We have a child with anaphylaxis in our service and endeavor to be nut free.

ALLERGIES

At the start of the year any child with a medical condition or allergy must provide an allergy plan to Erin at the interview session at the start of the year. The plans must be dated and signed with the Dr stamp, address and contact details and be dated from the year your child is to start kinder. No child will be able to commence kinder until these plans are provided and signed by the Dr for the kindergarten.

ACCIDENT/INJURY/ILLNESS

Accidents, injuries, and illness can occur at any time within our program. All staff are trained in first aid and will provide care to your child if they become injured or unwell while at kinder. A curtesy phone call will always be provided to families, any time we administer first aid to your child. Families will be asked to complete and sign the accident/injury or illness form anytime your child requires one to be filled out to cater for their needs.

Emergency procedures for incidents requiring evacuation of the building

We have an emergency evacuation procedure in place at our kindergarten. This information can be found in the foyer and by any door that is an emergency exit at the kindergarten. We practice evacuations each term with the children.

Illness and infection disease

Due to Covid our policies have changed and any child with a cough, sniffle, runny nose, temperature, sore throat will not be able to enter the kindergarten until they are well.



SUN SMART POLICY

Sunhats will be provided for your child to wear at kinder. Hats must stay in each child's designated pigeonhole to prevent the spread of headlice and cross infection.

Sunscreen will be provided for parents to apply to their child each session out in the foyer, we will top up your child's sunscreen as required throughout the day.

KINDERGARTEN UNIFORM

Kindergarten uniform is available for purchase from Rufcut clothing. It is not compulsory, highly recommended for each child in preparation for wearing a school uniform.

Uniforms can be ordered from Rufcut clothing, 202 Lyons St South, Ballarat Central, Ph 5332277

A small number of uniforms can be purchased from the kinder on interview day, must be paid in cash on the day of the interview.

Clothing and footwear

Please provide your child with the following while at kinder

- Change of clothing and underwear in their bags for accident or when they play with messy play
- A coat and winter hat for the cool weather
- Please do not send your child in spaghetti straps, open shoulder dresses or singlet tops. Children are required to be dressed appropriately for sun smart weather
- No crocs, difficult shoes while outside exploring. Runners, supportive shoes for summer are preferred to prevent accidents and injuries when climbing, allow children opportunities for risky play experiences that will not interfere with inappropriate footwear.
- Slippers may be worn inside during the cooler months, please pack an additional pair of shoes to be worn outside.

SUPERVISION BEFORE AND AFTER KINDER

Please supervise your child in the front yard and on the ramp while waiting for the kinder to open.

Please do not allow your child to climb the balustrade or brick work.

Please do not allow your child to swing on the gate or to hold the gate open for others, this goes against our gate policy and can easily allow a child to leave the kindergarten without their parent if the gate is left open.

Children must be always accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the kindergarten grounds.

END OF THE KINDER SESSION

Children can be collected by their adult from the foyer; however, children must remain on the mat until their name is called by their teacher. Please do not encourage your child to leave the mat until their name has been called and asked to leave by their teacher.

PHOTOS

We will display photos of our kinder week for all families to see on storypark. These weekly reflections are not to be cut and pasted or shared to other media platforms without consent from the child or family, anyone found to be sharing this content without consent will be liable for breach of privacy and confidentiality.

EXCURSIONS AND INCURSIONS

We have excursions and incursions planned for the 4-year-old kindergarten group. We do not usually have planned excursions for the 3-year-old group, rather leave this for when they are in 4-year-old kindergarten.

NOTICES AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Any notices will be provided in paper format and on story park in our community posts for everyone to see and access, please utilize notification on storypark so you do not miss any information.

IMPORTANT ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

If your child is away from kinder, it is your responsibility to contact the kinder and let us know if they are sick, have an appointment or feeling tired as to why they will not be attending the session for the day. Our absentees are logged daily, and the data is sent to Department of Education and Training.

The attendance book will be made available for families, to sign in each morning. Please write who will be dropping the child off with your name, not mum, nan, dad etc. This is also relevant for the end of kindergarten session when you collect your child. Please write in who has collected your child and time. Complete this section at the end of the kindergarten session.

RECORDS

It is a requirement for our Regulations and Acts that our enrolment forms, emergency contact sheets and ECKA are kept up to date with any changes to your personal details, example change of emergency contact, mobile phone number, address, new contacts added etc.

If your child has had updated immunization history, address, allergies personal details, please provide this at the earliest convenience for us to update your details.

Any person unknown to teaching staff will be asked to provide photo id as proof of identity, no child will be able to leave the kindergarten unless parental consent has been provided at the start of the session or

through the session, of change of person collecting your child from kinder. Please expect a telephone call if this occurs, as we can not let anyone take a child from kinder without parental consent.

BELONGINGS

Please clearly label your child's clothing to prevent it from becoming lost. Any items lost at kinder is not the teaching staff responsibility. Clearly label your child's clothes.