



Wallace and District Kindergarten

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 WALLACE & DISTRICT KINDERGARTEN

Wallace and District Kindergarten is located in the picturesque countryside of Wallace, set among beautiful trees and the call of birds. Our community acknowledges that the first people to live on and care for this land were the Wadawurrung people. They are the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the Wallace and District Kindergarten is built. We pay our respects to the Wadawurrung Elders, past, present, and future, acknowledging the vital role they play in connection to country and culture. We pledge to protect, respect and care for the land, animals and people for generations to come.



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



**Wallace
and District
Kindergarten**

729 Bungaree-Wallace Road, Wallace, 3352

(03) 5334 0268 / 0409 237 856

wallace.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

ecka.org.au



11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree VIC 3355

(03) 5339 5055

info@ecka.org.au

ecka.org.au

TERM DATES FOR 2024

2024	Start Date	Finish Date	Public Holidays
Term 1	5 th February *	28 March	Labour day 11 th March
Term 2	15 April	28 June	ANZAC Day 25 th April Kings Birthday 10 th June
Term 3	15 July	20 September	
Term 4	7 October	19 December	Melbourne Cup 5 th November

* Children commence after the meet and greet interview in early February. Start times can vary so please check Storypark for details on your child's starting date and times.

SESSION TIMES FOR 2024

1st Year (3yos) & 2nd Year (4yos) Groups (combined)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wirran	9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00		
Parrwang	9:00 - 2:00			9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00
Kuwarrk		9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00	
Djirnap	9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00			9:00 - 2:00
Porrgil			9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00	9:00 - 2:00

OUR KINDERGARTEN



Along with welcoming your child, we also welcome you and your families to the Wallace and District Kindergarten community. Kindergarten is a wonderful place for children to interact and learn from each other, but it also a great way for families to meet and talk with other families, often developing lifelong friendships. We hope that 2024 will be a year full of joy, learning and fun for everyone.

This booklet contains important information about your child's attendance at our kindergarten. Please take the time to read the information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us to discuss these.

EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

Our Educational Curriculum is developed in line with and reflects the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). These frameworks focus on the benefits of play-based learning and the opportunities this allows for children to learn and grow. The role of educators is to encourage and support, directly teach, positively guide, and facilitate in play and social interactions. This is achieved through an ongoing planning cycle of observing, analysing, planning, acting, and reflecting.



PLAY BASED LEARNING

Children are naturally motivated to play, to actively and imaginatively engage with people, objects and their environment. Our play-based curriculum builds on this intrinsic motivation, using play as a context for learning within environments that are thoughtfully designed for play-based learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to exercise independence and choice and to initiate play ideas, to focus their attention and to achieve intrinsic satisfaction.

While playing, children may be pretending, exploring, manipulating, constructing, creating, investigating, discovering, thinking, organising, imagining, interacting, negotiating, and making sense of their world, promoting their holistic development (physical, social, emotional, cognitive and creative)



*Play is the highest form of research –
Albert Einstein*

NATURE PEDAGOGY



The outdoor learning environment is valued just as much as the indoor learning environment and outdoor experiences are an essential part of children's daily environment and life.

Young children thrive, and their minds and bodies develop best when they have free access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences.

Through outdoor play, young children learn skills in social interaction and friendship. They also learn to care for living things and their

environment, be curious and fascinated, experience awe, wonder and joy and become 'lost in the experience'

They can satisfy their deep urge to explore, experiment and understand and become aware of their community and locality.

Slow learning is good learning, giving time for assimilation. When children can move between indoors and outdoors, their play or explorations develop further.

OUR EDUCATORS



Wendy Parry

Early Childhood Teacher and Service Leader



Ange Tinetti

Early Childhood Educator



Brenda Nash

Early Childhood Teacher



Brittany Hitchings

Early Childhood Educator

SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

At Wallace and District Kindergarten we draw on many different philosophies and thoughts about contemporary early childhood and are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, both near and far and aim to embed this learning in all aspects of our program, acknowledging that this learning is ongoing.

We recognise that childhood is a precious time rich in imagination, curiosity and creativity and we celebrate this.



The Image of the Child

Educators hold a strong image of the child, knowing they are capable, competent, curious and full of potential. Each child is regarded as an individual with their own unique family values, culture, experiences, skills and interests. We see each child as a powerful contributor to their own learning, and understand that they also learn from encounters that are experienced as being part of a group.



The Role of Educators

Our priority is to ensure each child feels safe, secure, and supported, fostering a sense of belonging and the opportunity to thrive. We see children and educators as partners in learning. We explore, question and research alongside each other, provoking thinking and the sharing of thoughts and ideas.



The Process of Play

We believe that play is crucial to child development. Through play, children explore, discover, and learn about their world, each other, and themselves. We aim to provide sustained periods of uninterrupted play, in an environment where children are unhurried. We place in high regard the process of learning over any finished product.



The Role of Families

We recognise that families are the first and most significant influence in a child's life and are respected as such. Families are invited and encouraged to participate in all aspects of our program, and to be partners in their child's learning.



The Role of the Environment

The environment as the third teacher plays an integral role by sparking and inspiring wonder, awe, and curiosity. Learning opportunities are a response to children's interests with intentional materials that promote deeper thinking and questioning. These environments allow children to encounter literacy and numeracy in meaningful ways each day during play, rather than through formal instruction.

We value the indoor and outdoor environment equally and believe that all children should have the opportunity to engage with nature in all the seasons.

FEES

As part of the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free from 2023. 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>

IMMUNISATIONS

No Jab No Play is a Victorian State Government legislation to **help protect children from serious** and possibly life-threatening illnesses. The legislation came into effect from 1 January 2016. Under this law, all children must be fully vaccinated or have an approved medical exemption to be enrolled in kindergarten. Evidence of up-to-date immunisation must be provided within the two months prior to the child commencing at the kindergarten. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register can be used as evidence for this.



Immunisation History Statements are available on request at any time by contacting Medicare: Phone: 1800653809

Email: acir@medicareaustrlia.gov.au

Online: <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts> or in person at your local Medicare service center. If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please talk to the kindergarten staff for assistance.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The educational program will be available to all families at the service through Storypark and displays. Please read the program, ask questions, and offer suggestions. We welcome your input to develop a sense of knowledge and understanding of your child's learning.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

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

There are many different ways that families may contribute in and out of kindergarten sessions. Some of the activities in the kindergarten session may include; attending an excursion, helping the children plant in our vegetable garden 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.

BEGINNING KINDERGARTEN

Beginning kindergarten can be an exciting and sometimes scary experience for your child. Each child is unique and will react to the kindergarten experience in varying ways. Some children may be confident in the new environment and others may be nervous. If you have concerns about how your child will settle, please talk to educators and we can discuss how best to manage your child's start to kinder, so it is a positive experience for everyone.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Please name all belongings carefully

Please dress your child in clothes which they can manage themselves, especially when going to the toilet. Also please consider your child's footwear – thongs, open-toed sandals, crocs and slip on shoes can be dangerous when running, climbing and using real tools and shovels.

We value messy play at kinder so please don't dress your child in their best clothes! Clothes should be practicable and easily washable.

In winter, please make sure children are dressed warmly and send a coat and gumboots, as we do access outdoor play each session.

Please ensure that **ALL** items are **labelled clearly** (with your child's name) so they can be returned to their owner if lost.

UNIFORMS

You can purchase **any** coloured t-shirt/skivvy/jumper/zip through top (from anywhere) and take to *Hip Pocket* to get the logo put on. Uniforms are not compulsory.

Hip Pocket

1265-1267 Howitt Street, Wendouree VIC 3355

Phone: (03) 5339-5446

WHAT TO BRING TO KINDER EVERY DAY

- **Lunch box** - We encourage Nude Food (no cling wrap or packaging etc) (*We encourage pieces of fresh fruit for snack and a sandwich/roll/wrap for lunch. Other healthy items can be included. Please no muesli bars, chips, chocolate, lollies or squeeze yoghurts. If you would like to include yoghurt please decant into a small container or single use tubs that can be recycled*)
- **We have children who are anaphylactic to nuts, so we are an NUT FREE service – this INCLUDES NO peanut butter or Nutella.**
- Drink Bottle (water only)
- Spare clothing: t-shirt, jumper, shorts/pants and underwear, singlet, and socks
- Raincoat/warm jacket for winter
- Gumboots for winter

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are an exciting time for many of our children and families, and we like to celebrate your child's birthday by singing Happy Birthday with a special wooden cake and real candles. On their birthday your child can bring a special toy/present from home to tell us about.

We ask that you **do not** bring in cake or treats to share for birthdays due to allergies and our healthy eating policy.

Please place any birthday invitations discretely in children's art/notice files (rather than handing out). This avoids any upset if not all children are invited.

SHOW AND TELL

Children have the opportunity for show and tell on their birthdays. We discourage toys from home at kinder at other times. If we have a topic of interest, we welcome input from home (i.e. books or objects) and special finds from nature are always welcome (nests, feathers, flowers etc.).

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

On arrival at the kindergarten please ensure you sign the attendance book located on the bench in the locker room. Please sign the actual time you arrive and depart rather than the normal session start and finish times. Please do not allow children to draw or write in the sign in book.

If you are not collecting your child please notify educators. We cannot allow children to leave the kindergarten unless the person collecting them is authorised to do so on the original enrolment form, or staff have been given written notification by parents or guardians.

To ensure our compliance with the Children's Services Regulations we are unable to accept children prior to the start of the session and children must be collected promptly at the end of the session.

When entering and leaving the kindergarten please ensure no child other than those for whom you are responsible leave the kindergarten

SUNSMART

We are a sun smart kindergarten. Children need to be dressed in suitable clothing for protection from the sun. Clothing should be cool and cover as much of the skin as possible. e.g. tops that cover the shoulders, arms and chest, have higher necklines or collars, and long shorts. Singlet tops or shoestring dresses do not provide adequate sun protection and are best layered with a shirt or t-shirt.

We will provide a hat for your child that will remain at kinder. We ask that you please apply sunscreen before the session (we will re-apply during session). Please supply your own if your child needs a particular sunscreen.

ASTHMA, ANAPHYLAXIS, ALLERGIES & MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please ensure that educators are informed of any asthma, anaphylaxis, allergies, sensitivities, or medical conditions your child has. Parents/Guardians need to provide a new asthma, anaphylaxis and allergy management plan each year, completed and signed by a doctor. **If any new condition is diagnosed or an existing condition changes during the kindergarten year, parents need to immediately notify educators.** Kindergarten educators are trained in asthma and anaphylaxis management.



Asthma –Children with asthma must have an asthma management plan in place to attend kinder. A spacer and inhaler must be provided to, and kept at the kindergarten (not in the child’s bag)

Allergies – Children at risk of anaphylaxis must have an anaphylaxis management plan in place to attend kinder. An epi-pen must be provided to, and kept at the kindergarten (not in the child’s bag).

Specific medical conditions - If children have specific medical needs, please ensure staff are informed of relevant information and any management plans.

Individual emergency management plans will be developed for each child.

ILLNESS

Within a small community such as a kindergarten, colds, tonsillitis, vomiting and diarrhea, chicken pox etc are easily transmitted. **We kindly ask to please keep your child at home if they are unwell and please notify us if your child is going to be away.** *If your child has been vomiting please do not send them to kindergarten for 48 hours after the vomiting has stopped.*

If your child becomes ill at kindergarten you will be asked to come and collect them.

PARKING

The parking area can become congested at drop off and pick up times – please consider safely parking along the edge of the service road.

Please be mindful that the disabled park needs to be kept clear for those who need it. Please do not park behind vehicles in this space.

You **must always** hold your child’s hand when outside of the kindergarten gate and please be conscious of other vehicles and pedestrians.

PROCEDURES FOR THE BUSHFIRE SEASON

Wallace and District Kindergarten will be pre-emptively closed on all Code Red Days declared for the Central Fire Ban District.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days’ notice of a planned closure. We will contact you directly with advice on planned closures and will confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure. Where it is not practical to confirm the closure in writing, you will be contacted via telephone or text.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child.

No staff will remain on site when the facility is closed by the threat of fire. A sign will be displayed on the kindergarten door to explain that the service is closed due to the declaration of a Code Red Rating for that day.

In the event of an emergency the kindergarten will respond in accordance with current emergency management procedures, which includes the requirement to follow direction from fire authorities. A current Emergency Management Plan is located at the kindergarten.

Please make sure kindergarten staff have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers, and an email contact.

Keep in touch with us by reading both Storypark, kindergarten and ECKA newsletters, and speaking to your kindergarten staff.

If at any time you have concerns about sending your child to kindergarten on a high fire danger day that has not been declared a Code Red or Extreme Fire Danger day, please remember that you are able to keep your child at home with you. There is no obligation for you to send your child to kindergarten if you are uneasy about the weather conditions on the day. However, please ensure you do let the staff at your kindergarten know if your child will not be attending kindergarten on any given day.

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to speak to your kindergarten teacher or contact ECKA on 53395055, or 0400 089 143.

We sincerely welcome you to the Wallace and District Kindergarten Community. We are here to answer any questions you may have. Please speak to us at any time with concerns or queries - no matter how big or small. We value your input and feedback.

Educators will be available at the end of each session and can also be contacted via phone or email. We look forward getting to know you, your child and family.



Be more involved in your child's learning

Storypark creates a secure online network
Of the people that matter most for your child.
It helps working parents, far-away family, educators
and specialists ensure children receive the best
opportunities possible.

How does Storypark help my child?

- Deeper insights into your child's unique interests, needs and abilities allows better support and improved outcomes.
- Improves communication between educators and families.
- Enables educators to spend their time with your child more effectively.
- Helps your child define 'what's next' in their learning.
- Share movement, song, and creative expression through audio and video.
- actively involves grandparents, family and close friends.

NEXT STEPS

1 Sign up and log in

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.

2 Invite family

Share your children's stories by inviting family members and close friends. Create a private network of people to share and support your child's learning journey.

3 Comment and create

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 you have invited will get an email to say a new story has been added.

Safe and private

- You own all content and control your child's digital footprint
- You manage who is invited to your child's storypark community
- In line with international online security best practices.

Free access for families

Access is free, for as long as you wish. Storypark travels with your child throughout their learning journey

Need help?

Explore our help centre to find the answer for almost everything.

“ It keeps me in touch with my children and family. I can spend long hours in the office, so it brightens my day to click and see my children's smiles and day-to-day activities. ” – Storypark Dad



11 QUICK AND EASY WAYS TO MAKE A NUDE FOOD LUNCH BOX

Kylie Matthews

Join the Nude Food Revolution by reducing the unnecessary waste in your child's lunch box. How? By following these 11 easy tips and tricks on how to make a quick and easy nude food lunch box! In the process, you'll be saving the planet and encouraging your kids to eat healthier too.

GET ORGANISED: A little bit of forward planning and dedicated time on a Sunday evening can be the difference between healthy nude food lunch boxes for the week and hastily prepared lunch boxes filled with packaged 'convenience' treats. Dedicate some time to cutting up and portioning lunch box snacks for the week ahead. Keep them fresh in a container in the fridge and grab them as you pack your child's lunch box each day.

GET THE RIGHT GEAR: When choosing a lunch box for your child, select one that has compartments. There are many different varieties of multi compartmental children's lunch boxes on the market. These section off the different varieties of food, doing away with the need for wasteful packaging.

TREAT 'EM RIGHT: Do away with those expensive, sugar-laden packaged lunch box snacks and discover how much easier, healthier and cheaper it can be to make them yourself. This way, you know exactly what ingredients are in the snacks your child eats - because you put them there! A little treat, like chocolate protein balls, muesli slice, muffins and homemade cookies are ideal as they're tasty and easy to throw in the lunch box.

DO AWAY WITH SPILLS: Choose a leak-proof, refillable bottle for your child to take to school over single-serve juice and water bottles. We all know our kids' stuff can take a real beating at school, so make sure you choose a sturdy drink bottle that will endure the rough and tumble of your child's busy day.

YOGHURT WITHOUT THE WASTE: Kids love yoghurt in their lunch boxes, but the packaging of store-bought varieties doesn't make it very nude food friendly or kind to the back pocket... But rest assured you don't need to rule out yoghurt from the nude food lunch box! Why not make it yourself or buy a big pot and put it in reusable containers?

TOO MUCH IS BARELY ENOUGH: You can NEVER have too many reusable containers on hand when it comes to nude food lunch boxes. These stackable and washable little gems are an easy replacement for cling wrap and other packaging and perfect for keeping cut fruit, vegetables and snacks fresh and safe from being squished! Also it ensures items that are unfinished aren't just thrown in the bin but resealed and brought home to possibly be eaten the next day. This keeps school rubbish to a minimum and the environment happy.

DIPS APLENTY: To entice your little one to eat the veggies you lovingly include in their nude food lunch box each day, add a little tub of hummus, salsa or avocado dip to the mix. How can any child - or grown-up, for that matter - resist that dippy-dippy goodness? Make a big batch of dip at the start of the week and portion it out for the week ahead to save you time and money.

KEEPING IT COOL: Insulating lunch boxes are essential in our hot Australian climate, to ensure foods don't spoil and our kids don't get sick. You can choose to freeze an item in the lunch box, such as a water bottle (some lunch boxes come with a 'freezie' drink bottle for this purpose) or invest in a freezable insulated lunch bag. It's just a matter of remembering to freeze your bottle, ice block or insulated bag the night before!!

REUSEABLE CUTLERY: Your kids may need cutlery in their lunch box - a spoon for their yoghurt, a fork to eat rice or messy cut up fruit ...Do away with disposable cutlery entirely and include reusable cutlery in your child's lunch box instead.

KEEP IT COVERED: Here's an awesome nude food alternative to cling wrap or Ziploc bags ... skins or bees wax wraps. They're reusable, easy to clean and have none of the nasties like BPA either.

GET CREATIVE: One of many the good things about nude food lunch boxes is that you can get a bit more creative with your food choices ...For example, using flimsy cling wrap to cover things like watermelon is a sure-fire way to create a disgusting mushy mess your child will chuck in the bin uneaten! But using a reusable container, they're more likely to survive AND get eaten ... In fact, you can make them irresistible by shaping them into love hearts (pictured) or stars. Try it! By making nude food fun, you're contributing to the success of the nude food movement.

