

# Ballan Early Education

## 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 BALLAN EARLY EDUCATION

This information booklet has been compiled so you may have a better understanding of your kindergarten - the hows and whys 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 Department of Education.



**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

### Ballan Early Education

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## TERM DATES FOR 2025

2025	Start Date	Finish Date	Public Holidays
Term 1	4th 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

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1		9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00	
2		9:00 - 3:00	9:00 - 3:00		

# OUR PHILOSOPHY

## VALUING CONNECTIONS

**At BEE we feel very strongly that families are vital partners, alongside educators and other children, in helping our children learn and develop.**

Warm, open, honest, respectful and timely interactions with families are highly valued. We seek to provide families with as much information as we can about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what it means for children. We strongly encourage families to share their ideas, thoughts, concerns and questions with our team as much as possible.

**We treasure our connection to the natural world, and seek to create and promote sustainability.**

We encourage as much time as possible in the outdoors in all weather, and find ways to cherish and learn from the natural world around us. We aim to instil within children a desire to care for and support the environment in which we live.

**We view children as important members of a broader community, and support their development as active and informed citizens.**

We help children to develop skills in how to be part of a community, including listening and responding appropriately to others, and understanding the consequences of actions on others. We encourage and actively support the formation of friendships. Collaboration between families, educators, schools and other community supports help us support children as their identities, knowledge, understandings, dispositions, capabilities, skills and relationships change over time.

**Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are acknowledged, respected and valued.**

We show respect through actions such as a daily Acknowledgement of Country, and by incorporating learnings from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, such as using local language words, by viewing traditional and modern art practices, or by learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methods of caring for country.

## VALUING A SLOW PEDAGOGY

**Early childhood education is about giving children time to seek and make meaning of the world**

The present is just as important for children as is the past or the future. We support slow pedagogy, in which educators take time to 'dive deep' with children, taking the time to return again and again to interests, ideas, or experiences and explore them in depth rather than fleetingly rushing from one experience to another.

**We value flexible routines that respect children's needs.**

Educators understand the importance of taking time to be with children, to sit with them and to spend time in the moment, listening to them and sharing thoughts and ideas. It also means that we are not run by the clock, but rather we allow time for children to engage in periods of uninterrupted play, ensuring our transitions and routines, such as meal times, support and not interrupt this learning and play.

**We observe and document children's learning in meaningful ways**

We use photos and written documentation in respectful ways, to support reflection of, and planning for, children's ongoing learning. We share this with children where possible.

**We value critical reflection and continuous improvement**

Best practice and quality outcomes underpin our practice, supported by a strong culture of critical reflection. Current research, theories and understandings are considered and applied as appropriate to our service. We treasure feedback from families, community, children, other educators, and management, in helping to continue our own growth.

## WHAT KINDERGARTEN OFFERS YOUR CHILD

Kindergarten offers your child new experiences within a group outside the family.

It provides an atmosphere that inspires exploration, discovery and learning in a play-based environment. At kindergarten, children are provided with the opportunities to develop the skills to be independent while supported by staff who offer assistance, guidance, support and encouragement.

Each child is given the opportunity to creatively express his/her feelings and ideas, is learning to play with others, is encouraged to be a confident and involved learner and an effective communicator.

This kindergarten follows a play-based curriculum planned in line with Early Years Frameworks, individual observations of each child's learning and development, interests of children and links to community events.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD SETTLE

- In the week before kindergarten begins, discuss our routine, and use the names of the educators who will be working with your child.
- Always say goodbye to your child. Leaving when they are not looking can be distressing. If your child is experiencing separation difficulties please be guided by staff, often it is best to say goodbye and leave quickly. You are more than welcome to telephone us to see how your child has settled. Be assured your child's emotional wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us and we will contact you if we believe they will not settle.
- Ask about their day, what story did you read, what songs did you sing, did you do a puzzle, did you make a friend, did anything funny happen..... etc.
- Arrive on time to collect your child, children can become distressed quickly if they are left waiting, especially if they are the last one.

## CLOTHING

- Children are required to wear either a broad-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat from September to April or when the UV level is 3 or above, with a winter hat during the cooler months. The hat must be named and left in the child's kindergarten bag. The UV rating will be checked daily by educators to ensure sun protection is used when required.
- **Summer**
- For the safety of the children, we ask that thongs, crocs and slip on shoes not to be worn at the kindergarten, as they can be dangerous when the children are running or climbing. Sunscreen should be applied prior to attending the kindergarten. The kindergarten do have a bottle of shared Sunscreen, *however if your child is allergic, please supply your own. We will provide you with some paperwork to sign to authorize the use of their own sunscreen while at kinder.*
- **Winter**
- Solid shoes or gumboots are recommended. For comfort, safety and cleanliness, it is advisable for children to wear slippers inside the kindergarten during winter months. Please ensure that slippers are named. Warm waterproof coats and hats are advisable for cold weather, as the children will go outside, even when raining. Undercover areas for playing are also available to children on wet days.
- Remember to dress children in clothes that they can manage themselves and it is best to use clothes that wash easily. Children are to bring a bag each session, large enough for paintings, etc. Small towels, smocks etc. will be supplied by the kindergarten.



## 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 a vegetable garden, cutting up a shared fruit platter or coming in to read a story, or out of session by supporting social events and providing your feedback and ideas. We often ask for donations of items to help with our learning experiences, so this is another way that you can be involved.

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.

## BIRTHDAYS

If your child is having a birthday, you are most welcome to bring cupcakes or other treats for the children to share. Families of children who have allergies to certain foods are encouraged to talk to the Educator so that these can be managed appropriately. Birthday treats are given to children to take home at the end of the session. If for some reason you would prefer us not to mention birthdays (e.g. for religious beliefs) please talk to the educators.



## HEALTH AND ABSENCE

Please do not bring your child to kindergarten if unwell, particularly if your child is experiencing covid symptoms. Kindergarten is a fabulous and fun place to be, but if your child is unwell or overtired the stimulation and challenges of the kindergarten environment can be very difficult to cope with.

In fairness to other children, their families and staff please keep your child at home for 48 hours after diarrhoea/vomiting ceases.

Please phone or message the kindergarten to let staff know if your child or a member of your family has an infectious disease, so that they may tell you how long the regulations state he/she must be excluded from kindergarten. If your child is going to be away for more than a few days (i.e., if you are going on holidays etc.) please notify the teacher.

## IMMUNISATION



By law to finalise your kindergarten enrolment you must provide the kindergarten with a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows your child is up to date with all immunisations that are due or able to receive for their age. In some circumstances a 16 week 'grace period' can be applied so you child can start at the service while you arrange to get a statement. The kinder can advise you if that applies to you. The quickest way to get your child's statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively you can call the AIR on 1800 653 809 to request your child's statement to be sent to you.

More information can be found at [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)



## MEDICATION

Medication Book – All medications to be administered at the kindergarten must be recorded in the medication book. These medications must be in their original container, complete with original label, instructions, and expiry date. Any children with medical conditions that require action plans (such as asthma), these must be provided prior to commencement.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

These procedures are displayed throughout the Centre. During the year we will practice emergency evacuation and containment procedures with the children in each group, at least once each term.

## FIRST AID KIT

The First aid kits are located in the kinder room and outside. These are also taken on any excursions. Each staff member is trained in First Aid, Asthma Management and Anaphylaxis