

Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten Family Information Book

Welcome
Gulpa Gaka Anginya - Yorta Yorta
Gaka Yawul – Bangerang



We would like to welcome your child and family to our Service. This booklet contains information to assist you and your child with a smooth transition between home and our service. We hope that we can form a strong partnership with you in the year ahead, so that your child can become the best they can be. Visitors are warmly welcomed at our service.

Acknowledgement to Traditional Owners

“We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the traditional owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors”.

WHAT IS KINDERGARTEN?

The year before school

Kindergarten is the year before school, often the first step your child takes into the world beyond that of his/her home and family. It is the beginning of your child's formal education. Kindergarten is the first year of a continuing process, but it is not an early form of school, nor is it simply a preparation for school.

A child's early years are very important because basic skills and attitudes are formed and knowledge gained which form the building blocks for future development.

At kindergarten we aim, through play, to lay a foundation upon which effective learning of these basic skills can be achieved. Through fostering a safe environment and setting limits in a positive way, we aim to encourage and challenge the children to be the best they can be, physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally.

A quality kindergarten program combines the creativity and skill of dedicated, well-educated and qualified teachers and the support of families to provide a safe and secure environment in which children enjoy learning.

WHAT IS PRE-KINDERGARTEN?

The year before Kindergarten

Pre-Kindergarten is the year before Kindergarten, it allows a child to gain confidence to separate from their primary care giver. It is about having fun in a safe and friendly environment and this makes for a smooth transition into kindergarten.

Pre-Kindergarten allows children to explore, form friendships and have new experiences.

Play is a child's work and it is through play that we aim to help your child learn.

Pre-Kindergarten is a safe environment and we set positive limits to encourage children to develop in a balanced way - emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.

TERM DATES 2021

Visit the Council website for term dates:

greaterhepparton.com.au/kindergarten-term-dates

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS that may affect attendance 2021

Visit the Council website for a list of public holidays that may affect attendance:

greaterhepparton.com.au/kindergarten-term-dates

The Service will be closed on Public Holidays and during the school holidays.

There is also one day allocated annually for Educators to attend the Professional Development Training (date to be advised).

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS OFFERED AT THE SERVICE

OCCASIONAL CARE - only applicable to the following services:

- Tallygaroopna
- Katandra West

The Early Years Rural Occasional Care Program provides occasional care for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 6 years (who have not commenced school) in facilities that cater for children's needs. We trust you and your child/ren will enjoy being part of an environment that is secure, friendly and stimulating.

A session at Occasional Care provides a balance of planned experiences appropriate to your child's development and skill levels. Experiences are varied, provided inside and outside and designed by our team of educators to support your child's interests and development.

Occasional Care Session Information

- Operates Thursday at Katandra West and Friday's at Tallygaroopna during school terms
- A Rural Occasional Care session can be booked one week in advance
- Cancellations – the centre needs to be notified by 8:30am on the day that care is booked otherwise full fees will be charged.
- Payment for sessions must be made on arrival on the day of attendance
- A 'Waiting list' is available which will be rotated to the next weeks booking sheet before new bookings are taken to ensure all families have access to a place
- Children may attend from:
 - 9.00am to 12.00pm (3 hour session) or
 - 9.00am to 2.00pm (5 hour session)

Occasional Care Fees

Visit the Council website to see Occasional Care fees.

greaterShepparton.com.au/kindergarten-fees

Direct Debit Dishonour Fee

A \$15.00 dishonour fee applies if there are insufficient available funds to make the scheduled direct debit payment.

PROGRAM

When children play they are showing what they have learnt and trying to understand. This is why play is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework. The Framework focuses on your child's learning. Educators will work with you in order to get to know your child well. They will create a learning program that builds on your child's interests and abilities, and keep you in touch with your child's progress.

We value & encourage independence, self-confidence & a desire to explore & find things out. We provide the children with opportunities to imagine, wonder, explore, create, manipulate, discover, practice, reflect, evaluate, laugh, sing, move their bodies and resolve conflicts.

Our educational program is designed with your child's interests and strengths as part of our focus, is offered indoors and outdoors, with many open-ended activities on offer.

We look forward to working in partnership with you in further developing and strengthening these skills in your child.

AIMS

- For the children and their families to feel safe, secure and supported.
- For the children to learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
- To assist the children and their families to respond to diversity with respect.
- For the children and their families to develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities.
- To encourage the children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.
- For the children to become strong in their social, emotional and physical wellbeing.
- For the children to continue to develop and extend on their curiosity, cooperation, creativity, persistence and imagination.
- For the children to develop a range of skills such as problem solving, experimentation and investigating.
- For the children to interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement, where it raises quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency for early childhood education and care services across Australia.

The NQF includes:

- Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations
- National Quality Standards
- Assessment and Quality rating process
- National learning frameworks

The National Quality Framework is supported in Victoria by the Early Years Learning Framework.

Further information can be accessed at the following websites:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations>

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The Early Years Learning Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years and through transition to school. It communicates these expectations through the five following learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of well being
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective learners

The Framework provides broad direction for teachers/educators to facilitate children's learning. Children's learning is ongoing and each child will progress towards the outcomes in different and equally meaningful days.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework-0>

ENROLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Parent/guardians are required to complete the following to enrol their child at the service:

- ***Children's Services Enrolment form Part A: Family Form.***
- ***Children's Services Enrolment form Part B: Child Form.***

Please ensure all sections are completed on both forms.

Parental education and occupation details form: (only applicable to Kindergarten children).

- Education and occupation data:
 - From 2018 services must collect the occupation and education details from parents/guardians of all children enrolling in a funded kindergarten program. Occupation and education information will be used to determine the amount of additional school readiness funding those individual services will receive.

Direct Debit form

It is a requirement by Greater Shepparton City Council that Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten families are required to complete a Direct Debit form on enrolment.

PRIVACY

Greater Shepparton City Council complies with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001.

IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, to confirm enrolment for your child you **must** provide the service, evidence that your child is up to date with all of their immunisations.

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) must be used as evidence of up to date immunisation.

Other immunisation records, such as 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration from you are can **not** be accepted.

Alternatively if your child is not up to date with their immunisations you may be eligible to enroll under the 16 week grace period. Families should discuss their individual circumstances with the service.

You can obtain your AIR statement by:

- using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.
- in person at your local Medicare office, or
- call the Australian Immunisation Register enquiries line on 1800 653 809 to request a statement. It can take 14 days to get your statement in the post.

Please note: parents are required to provide the service with evidence that their child continues to be up to date with immunisations while attending, for example after their child receives an immunisation, or in response to the request from the service.

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit/immunisation-and-the-law/immunisation-in-victoria>

CHILDREN'S MEDICAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

If your child has a diagnosed specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, please ensure you discuss this with the service and complete the 'Child's Medical Information' section on the Children's Services Enrolment form Part B: Child Form.

The service is required to make available to you the Medical Conditions policy and provide you with a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan to be completed in consultation with the service to ensure the risks related to your child's diagnosed health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are assessed and minimised whilst your child is in education and care.

If your child has a Medical Management plan provided by a Medical Practitioner, you are required to provide a copy to the service to be kept with your child's Enrolment Form.

Please ensure you inform the service of any relevant changes relating to the nature or management of your child's specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, including an updated Medical Management Plan.

ILLNESS- EXCLUSIONS

It is important that families keep their child home if the child is unwell. A child, who is unwell struggles to participate in the program, is often tired and unhappy and in some instances may be contagious. We do understand that it can be challenging for the child, the family and work commitments to have a child not able to attend our service due to illness. By your child attending only when they are well supports the health and wellbeing of all children and families and limits and often reduces the risk and impact of illness on other children and families.

Families are requested to notify the service if their child contracts an infectious disease nominated on the Victorian Department of Health Communicable Infectious Disease Chart as displayed in the service and to follow the listed exclusion timeframes.

If you suspect that your child may have an infectious disease, please take your child to a Medical Practitioner to have a diagnosis confirmed.

In the event of your child becoming unwell whilst at kindergarten, the service will contact you or your listed emergency contact if unable to contact you.

Further information can be found at :

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

MEDICATIONS

Should your child require medication while attending Kindergarten, please ensure that you inform educators.

If medication is to be administered to your child the medication MUST be:

- from its original container
- bearing the original label and instructions or with the name of the child to whom the medication is to be administered
- before the expiry or use by date

All medication administered to a child whilst attending the service is required to be authorised by a parent/guardian, where a Medication Authorisation form provided by the service is to be completed by the parent/guardian.

Importantly, medications cannot be left in children's bags at any time. This is to ensure the safety of all children attending. Please pass on all Medication to an educator on arrival to the service.

COURT OR PARENTING ORDERS OR PARENTING PLAN REQUIREMENTS

If your child has any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans relating to the power, duties, responsibilities or authorities of a person in relation to your child or access to your child, please ensure you discuss this with the service and complete the 'Court Orders, Parenting Orders or Parenting Plans relating to your child' section on the *Children's Services Enrolment form Part B: Child Form*.

You are required to provide a copy of the current court order, parenting order or parenting plan to the service to be kept with your child's Enrolment Form.

Please ensure you inform the service of any relevant changes relating to the court order, parenting order or parenting plan, or if you believe a custody order may be violated, so we can assist in keeping your child safe whilst attending our service.

FEES AND PAYMENTS 2021

Visit the Council website to see Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten fees:

greaterhepparton.com.au/kindergarten-fees

- **Direct Debit Dishonour Fee**

A \$15.00 dishonour fee applies if there are insufficient available funds to make the scheduled direct debit payment.

Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten families are required to complete a Direct Debit form on enrolment unless full annual fee has been paid by 23 February or if the family is eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

Outstanding balances will be deducted from your nominated account on the last Wednesday of each month. You can pay the amount at any time prior to the last Wednesday of the month if you wish to avoid your account being direct debited.

Concession Card holders or Early Start to Kindergarten (ESK) are eligible for free or low cost funded kindergarten.

Your card must be presented to the kindergarten teacher prior to 23 February or may be presented to a Children's Services Officer at Council Office, Welsford Street to avoid full fees being charged for the kindergarten program.

For further information on Kindergarten subsidies:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/comms/kinderfeesub.pdf>

ATTENDANCE

Children attending kindergarten session on a regular basis enables them to develop a sense of belonging and further supports them to develop life skills.

Please contact the service to let them know if your child is going to be absent from attending their kindergarten session.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Sign in/out book – this is located at the service entrance and it is a legal requirement that your child must be signed in and out of the service with the actual arrival & departure time and parent signature.

On arrival and departure please ensure you speak to Educators to ensure the educators are aware of your child arriving and departing from the service.

Please Note: Under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, children will only be permitted to leave the service with those authorised to collect them.

Authorisation for someone else to collect your child from the service is to be completed on the *Children's Services Enrolment form Part A: Family Form* - 'Authorisation' section. You must complete the Authorised Nominee section, where the person's name, address, phone numbers and relationship to the child is to be provided.

Photo ID of the Authorised Person will be required on their first visit to collect your child from the service.

WHAT TO BRING

Please **label all belongings** so we can assist your child in placing items in their bags

Bag:

A bag for your child's belongings

A change of clothes:

Messy play is part of our daily program so we advise you always keep a spare set of labelled clothes in your child's bag.

Drink bottle:

Please provide a water drink bottle every day your child attends kindergarten.

Lunch box:

The children may be required to bring their own morning tea and lunch to kindergarten (each service is slightly different, please check with your child's service for their specific requirements). On arrival please encourage your child to place their lunch box in the fridge. We promote healthy eating. Food and drinks provided by families are requested to be nutritious, age appropriate and easily opened by your child. Please keep in mind, to support sustainability; wrapper free lunch boxes are preferred. Healthy lunchbox ideas can be found at:

<https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes>

Wet weather clothing:

There are many learning opportunities in the outdoors all throughout the year. When it is cold, windy and wet we still venture outdoors to make the most of all learning opportunities. Gumboots, coats, beanies, and any other wet weather clothing help us to stay comfortable when outdoors on these days. Spending some time every day outside, in most weather conditions supports your child's ongoing physical health, growth and development.

Shoes:

Your child will need to wear shoes which support their feet well so they are not restricted in their running and climbing activities. Suitable shoes include: runners, shoes with buckles, laces or Velcro.

Thongs, crocs or slip on sandals/ shoes do not provide the support required for your child to safely run, climb and balance.

SUN PROTECTION

The service recognises the importance of providing a healthy balance between too much and too little ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun to promote good health.

Once the UV level reaches 3 and above sun protection measures will be in place for all children.

Children will be required to wear and apply sunscreen before going outside and educators will reapply the sunscreen during the day as required.

Families are encouraged where possible to provide their child with loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible and supply sunhats that meet Cancer Council Australia recommendations

Further sun safe information please can be found at: <https://www.sunsmart.com.au/>

SETTLING IN

Beginning in kindergarten is a very positive experience for families and children and can sometimes be quite an overwhelming experience. The child and family have new educators to meet, a new environment to settle into and a new routine to become familiar with. For other children it can be the first time they have been away from their family and the first time in the kindergarten setting.

Families are more than welcome to stay at the start of the session to help settle your child in.

It helps to sit with your child, read with them, participate in an activity that is set up and speak with the educators and your child about how the child's morning/afternoon has been

or an interest your child has. This helps them to build trust in where they are and the educators they will be with.

We do ask you to please make sure you say good-bye to your child when leaving. This reassures them that you are coming back to collect them and will see them at the end of the session

CELEBRATIONS

To support children to develop an awareness of, and respect for diverse values and beliefs Celebrations can be used to bring people together, to create a feeling of belonging and to develop a sense of community amongst families, educators and children.

Please share with us special events and celebrations which are important to your child and your family by discussing these with the service.

TOYS

If your child wants to bring something from home this is a great way to share with the other children a part of their home story.

Before bringing in their favourite toy, please encourage them to think about how they may feel if the other children would like to play with it, or if it became lost or damaged. Your child's toy is very precious to them and we will do all we can to help your child look after it.

Please speak with one of the educators if you have bought in something from home and they will let you know the way this can be managed. Often, it may be only shown at circle time and then taken home again.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions, regular outings and events (in the service) provide opportunity to expand and enhance children's experiences, explore different environments and engage in meaningful ways with their communities.

A risk assessment is completed for all excursions /regular outings by the service before the children are to participate. You will be required to complete the *Children's Services Excursion/Regular Outing Authorisation* form, providing authorisation for your child to attend prior to the excursion/ regular outing.

If you would like to know more about the different types of excursion, please speak with an Educator.

BUSH KINDER

Many of our services regularly offer a Bush Kinder program, some participate on a regular basis and others do this as a single event. A big part of bush kinder is exploring the environment and for the children to learn how to take considered risks in that environment. This means that with guided support from educators, the children learn about what is safe and respectful in the environment. For example, children quickly learn about assessing strength of branches for climbing by looking at the size of the branch and determining whether it is thick enough to support their weight and whether there is any danger underneath the branch in the landing area.

Educators take the children into the environment by themselves, often without the assistance of parents. This is so that a consistent approach is taken to the guiding of their learning and understanding about safety and respect for the environment. There will be a day set aside for families to join the children at bush kinder once the children have become familiar with the environment and are confident in the space.

Children play only with what nature provides, drawing on or developing their own imagination and creativity. Outdoor spaces with plants, trees, rocks, mud and water invite open ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking and a connection with nature.

COMMUNICATION

Effective, respectful communication between educators and families builds shared understanding of each other's expectations and attitudes. Each service may have a slightly different format to encourage open communications between educators and families, please check with your child's service for their communication options.

PARENT ADVISORY GROUP

Parents and carers are a very important part of our community and service. You are always welcome to visit and participate in our program whenever you are available or have some time to share. The children enjoy your involvement and the educator's value and appreciate your interest and support.

We value your suggestions for our program and we would love to include your child's current interests in our program. As your child is enrolled at our Kindergarten service, you automatically become a member of our Parent Advisory Group.

Families and carers are wonderful resources in our Service and there are many ways that you can contribute to your child's experience. If you have any skills or interests you feel would be interesting for the children or any activities you would like to have included in the program, please speak to one of the educators.

You may be able to contribute through;

- Joining us on Excursions
- Participating in events at the service – breakfast club, morning/ afternoon tea for families
- Snack/lunch roster
- Laundry roster
- Fundraising events
- Sharing special talents e.g. craft, cooking, music
- Special events/days e.g. mother's day, father's night, BBQ
- Input to kinder activity program.
- Policy reviews
- Helping us with equipment purchasing by shopping, catalogue surfing
- Attending meetings for community event support at the kindergarten
- Small maintenance jobs - If you are able to help with gardening, sewing, typing or mending equipment, the educators would be glad to hear from you
- Recycling: In many of our activities we use materials that are recycled. We would appreciate any items eg boxes, scrap material, milk bottle lids, in any quantity.

Have a chat with the Service team and let them know how you can help.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Our service is committed to fairness and equity when dealing with concerns and complaints and will ensure rights of all families are protected to have concerns and complaints raised and resolved promptly and courteously.

If you have a concern or complaint please speak to the Service Leader or following the Procedure for addressing concerns and complaints , that is displayed within the service.

If you require further information please don't hesitate to contact:

- Councils Children's Services Leadership Team

Phone: 58329783 or

Email Address: council@shepparton.vic.gov.au

- Department of Education and Training Hume Regional Office

Phone: 03 7022 1971 or 1300 307 415

Email Address: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au