

The Caterpillar Kinder Family Handbook 2024

Albert Park Preschool

18 Dundas Place Albert Park

www.albertparkkinder.com.au


RATED
EXCEEDING
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD
Rated Exceeding
under the National Quality Framework



Proud to be Australia's first
Carbon Neutral Early Childhood Service



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Welcome to our Kindergarten

We warmly welcome you to Albert Park Preschool. We hope that you will have a wonderful time with us gaining new experiences and forming new friendships. We are dedicated to providing a kind and nurturing environment where the wellbeing of all is valued and where all can contribute to the life and strength of the Kindergarten.

Our Kinder belongs to Community

We are a not for profit community Kindergarten with a long and proud history. The former City of South Melbourne opened some of the first Kindergartens in Victoria in the early 1900s. Our Kindergarten opened in 1948 and many children who attended here have returned in recent years as parents. Families have always played an important role in the success of the Kindergarten and since 1996 our Incorporated Association has been governed by a voluntary Parent Committee of Management. Our organisation is licensed to provide a registered Kindergarten Program by the Victorian State Government in accordance with the National Quality Framework *Education and Care Services National Law* & associated Regulations.

The day to day operation of the Kindergarten is the responsibility of our dedicated staff whose experience and expertise provides the platform for quality early childhood education.

We value the support we can give each other over and beyond your time here. Kindergarten is a special place in the life of families where lasting friendships are formed for both you and your children.

Our Partnership with Families

Quality early childhood education is very much about partnerships between families and educators. Through sharing of knowledge and working together we achieve greater understanding which, most importantly, will benefit your child.

We recognise that your family is your child's first and most influential teacher. We celebrate that no two children are the same and you are the ones who know your child best. When children and families share their knowledge and experience, this helps us to understand each child better and to teach with greater purpose. Together, we can develop a Kindergarten culture where we honour diversity in histories, languages, identity and choices whilst celebrating our shared future.

Together, we can support children to celebrate that we are all connected and dependent on one another for our wellbeing and learning. When we value each other's knowledge of each child, when we build trust and participate in shared decision-making, we are actively engaged in promoting high quality education for all children.

Our Partnership with Community & Promise to Bunjil

Partnerships within our community are key to our success and continuous strengthening as a service. We particularly acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which the Kindergarten is located – the first peoples of the Kulin nation. We promise to nurture and care for children and this land as they have always done – with love and respect, to protect the rivers, the creeks and the waterways and to observe the wisdom of Bunjil.

Our Commitment to Quality

We celebrate philosophy, partnerships, lifelong learning and reflective practice as the foundation of quality early childhood education. Children, staff, families, committee and community collaborate at our annual focus group to construct a shared vision and goals which are articulated in our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Our QIP captures our dreams on paper and we like to "dream BIG" at Kinder! The QIP celebrates our strengths as a service, the areas we are seeking to improve, and the goals and actions to take us forward. A copy of our QIP is available in the foyer and we invite you to view it and share your thoughts at any time.

Our Vision | Our Values

It is our vision to remain deeply connected to community – to be a "little Kinder with a big heart" taking care of our world and each other. We will continue to strive to see this reflected in our culture through living our 5 "c" values of **community, compassion, curiosity, collaboration and celebration**.



Contact Details and Session Times

We are open: Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm during School Terms

You will find us at: 18 Dundas Place Albert Park

Our web address is: www.albertparkkinder.com.au

Our contact details are: Telephone: 03 8672 9981 | Email: office@albertparkkinder.com.au

Our session times are:

3 year old

- Caterpillars
 - Monday 8.30am – 1.30pm
 - Wednesday 8.30am – 1.30pm
 - Friday 8.30am – 1.30pm

4 year old

- Butterflies (balam balam)
 - Tuesday 8.30am - 4pm
 - Thursday 8.30am - 4pm

2024 Term Dates:

Term 1

- Start Date: 30 January 2024 (Note: staff commence 29 January)
- Finish Date: 28 March 2024

Term 2

- Start Date: 15 April 2024
- Finish Date: 28 June 2024

Term 3

- Start Date: 15 July 2024
- Finish Date: 20 September 2024

Term 4

- Start Date: 7 October 2024
- Finish Date: 20 December 2024

For more information about us please refer to our website:

<http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/>



Our Philosophy

Along the meandering path of childhood, children find beauty and joy in great and small things. In childhood, children become aware of the wonder of life and the incredible marvel of being human.

In the presence of others, among gentle, smiling people, children discover lovely surprises each day. To grow in empathy and be a happy, caring human being, a child needs time and space to play.

Children are at the centre of their learning, discovering the pleasure of independence through encounters with people in supportive, respectful environments. Learning takes place when ideas, concepts and theories are shared. We celebrate the environment as a "third teacher" responsive to children's interests and strengths. We celebrate the beauty in our natural world and seek to provide a learning environment that supports the health and wellbeing of our planet and all who come in contact with our service.

To clearly see, to absolutely hear, to truly feel, all children need clarity, acceptance and generosity from their teachers and families. Children grow upward and outward through action and joy towards friendship, happiness and the discovery of the unknown.

At Albert Park Preschool we believe:

- young children learn best through play, that play is life and that life is learning
- children learn when they are free to explore, to make choices, to extend and develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world
- children are motivated to learn when they and their families are accepted, respected and celebrated.
- children learn best when they feel valued socially, emotionally and intellectually
- children develop positive dispositions towards learning through supportive and collaborative interactions with adults and peers, where teachers and children are researchers and learners alongside each other
- creativity emerges when children are given the time and space to freely explore the world around them in an atmosphere of mutual trust
- we are all connected with nature and our youngest citizens can, and do, play a key role in shaping a happy, healthy, sustainable future for our community

Our view of the child

We view the child as a loving, capable and competent individual seeking understanding of the world and their place in it.

We see all children as individuals capable of devising creative ways of knowing, understanding and making connections and meaning.

We see each child as a unique identity dependent on relationships and a sense of belonging to others.

Our hope for the future

We hope for an Australian future of compassionate and educated citizens who have equal opportunities to contribute to and engage happily with all facets of life.

We hope that all children develop a lifelong love of learning and that they will be curious, optimistic, and resilient into adulthood.

We hope to develop in all children a strong sense of identity, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging to a diverse community.

We hope to keep our promise to Bunjil - the creator deity of the Boonwurrung - to care for the children and Country.

We hope to maintain our deep connection with our local community as a little Kindergarten with a big heart.

We hope our values of celebration, collaboration, community, compassion and curiosity, are visible in everything we do.



Our Health Charter

At Albert Park Preschool Centre, we believe in the wonder of life and the incredible marvel of being human.

Our Vision

We strive to create a welcoming, caring, safe and supportive environment that assists all members of the Kindergarten community to experience "health" - defined by the World Health Organisation as a "State of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

We embrace a "whole of centre" approach to the promotion of health and wellbeing, along with adopting a holistic approach to all aspects of health.

To become a health promoting Kindergarten we are committed to working together to:

- encourage and support healthy lifestyles for children, staff, families and the community in which we live and play
- set clear goals around our vision to be a health promoting Kindergarten that are developed in partnership with our community and pursued collaboratively
- engage children, families and staff as active participants in the promotion of health and wellbeing
- encourage staff and families to be positive role models for healthy choices and lifestyles
- support children to engage physically, mentally, emotionally and socially with their surroundings, peers and teachers
- provide children with the tools and techniques to develop emotional literacy, accept and navigate challenge, and be optimistic, curious and resilient into adulthood
- incorporate opportunities for physical activity, mindfulness and learning about healthy choices into the planning of program that empower children to take action to enhance their health and wellbeing
- provide an environment that supports and encourages healthy choices and lifestyles, provides opportunity for calm and quiet, and complements health messages delivered in the program
- celebrate the beauty in our natural environment, clean air, fresh water, the growing of food and our interconnection with nature
- ensure staff, children and families are supported to access resources, tools and training to enhance their knowledge, compassion and capacity to promote health and wellbeing
- build partnerships with local health professionals, services and the wider community to enhance health promotion capacity
- ensure all our policies and procedures support and reflect the values contained within this Health Charter
- identify boundaries to the delivery of health promotion and supporting each other to overcome them with a commitment to ongoing improvement

Our Commitment

Albert Park Preschool Centre is committed to ensuring this charter is visible in the day-to-day practice of our Kindergarten. We are committed to ensuring respect, fairness and equality are promoted and modelled, and a sense of belonging is fostered for all.

At Albert Park Preschool we believe:

- that creating a healthy Kindergarten will improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all members of our community both now and in the future
- that children are competent and capable and can appreciate the importance of their own health and wellbeing – and others - when they see the values of health, wellbeing and respect modelled at home, at Kindergarten and in the general community
- that creating a healthy Kindergarten will support children to have the best possible start in life, helping them to flourish, and to contribute to a happy, healthy, sustainable future for our community



The Curriculum & The Reggio Emilia Approach

Celebrating our partnership with children

- We value the development of warm and trusting relationships between educators and children
- We recognise the importance of open-ended experiences for young children
- We know that the unexpected is sometimes better than anything planned. This is the joy of working with young children
- Every day is a surprise as we follow children's interests to form the basis of our program
- We understand the importance of time in nourishing relationships to build strong foundations
- We know the importance of listening to children so they can lead us and others in different ways of learning
- We know that each child is unique with different interests and various ways of expression
- We respect all children as capable and curious beings with abilities to discover their own realities through communication, collaboration and exchange with adults and peers

Pedagogy and Practice | The Reggio Emilia Approach

Early childhood educators draw on a range of theories and research to develop their teaching practice. Our centre is particularly inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach where children and their interests are at the centre of their learning and teachers are learners alongside children.

The poem "*hundred languages of children*" written by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Approach, is displayed in our foyer. This poem refers to the many ways children have of expressing themselves and its words serve to remind us that children are curious, competent and capable of extraordinary things!

The Early Years Learning Framework

Our curriculum is based around a number of key concepts and principles that reflect the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), entitled ***Belonging, Being and Becoming***.

The **key principles** that guide the EYLF and our own understandings focus on creating an environment where the following are embedded in our practice:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children, families and colleagues
- Partnerships with families, children, early childhood educators and the community
- High expectations and equity where every child, family and teacher are valued and catered for
- Respect for diversity where difference is acknowledged and celebrated in respectful ways that enhance our understanding
- Ongoing learning and reflective practice where we as teachers take the time to reflect on what and why we do what we do and what might change and why

The 5 key learning outcomes:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. IDENTITY: | Children have a strong sense of identity |
| 2. COMMUNITY: | Children are connected with and contribute to their world |
| 3. WELLBEING: | Children have a strong sense of wellbeing |
| 4. LEARNING: | Children are confident and involved learners |
| 5. COMMUNICATION: | Children are effective communicators |



What does this look like? What will my child learn?

Our curriculum is built around a play-based program focussed on the interests of the children together with the critical reflection and intentional planning undertaken by teachers.

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. Play and learning are entwined in such a way that it is difficult to separate. When children play with each other they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings. During play, children use complex language to extend their ideas.



What do early childhood educators do?

The teacher's role is to create supportive environments where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. We will engage in sustained, shared conversations with children to extend their learning. We will ask questions that will stimulate thinking and we will nurture and foster the engagement of the mind and development of our problem-solving skills.

We will embark on sustained projects to engage children in hypothesising and problem solving. We will encourage positive dispositions for learning and creative thinking by developing learning environments that encourage children to explore and construct in imaginative ways. We will provide balance between teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences.

Our daily rhythms, routines and learning experiences provide children with a sense of security and stability, enabling children to predict what will happen next, building confidence and a sense of self.

We will work alongside children to model and promote positive ways to interact with and relate to others. We will use strategies to help children recognise when play is unfair and we will offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair, respectful and inclusive learning community.

Teachers maintain confidential records of each child, charting their progress in all areas – cognitive, physical, social and emotional – to build a picture of how to best support the growing child to thrive. We do this by observing the children at play, by documenting their words and actions, listening to their thoughts and feelings and supporting the ways in which they interact with others. With this information, the teacher engages in a process of critical reflection and individualises a learning plan for every child with strategies designed to encourage and support further learning and development.

We will provide opportunities for your child to:

- be celebrated, loved and listened to in a safe and secure environment with people who care and understand their individual ways of being and knowing
- be creative with music, language, drama, movement, dance, puppetry and many other learning experiences
- connect with nature and learn about the world's oldest continuous living culture
- take risks, challenge their thinking and extend their ideas
- engage in dramatic play and role play both with and without props
- experience a wide range of sensory materials
- enjoy quiet times and times of intense concentration both with and without others
- challenge themselves physically and intellectually
- build friendships and engage in reciprocal relationships
- develop understandings of equity and fair play
- strengthen confidence and positive self-esteem

We will work in partnership with families to support children to respect and celebrate each other and the world around them.



Our Program & Practice

The Program includes all the experiences and activities that teachers prepare based on critical reflection and observations of individual children, their interests and developmental level.

Your child's day at Kindergarten

At the start of each session, your child will be welcomed by the educators. The children may choose to play indoors or outside and can freely move between the spaces as their play and interests dictate.

The children are encouraged to choose their own activities from the purposefully designed learning centres. They are supported to seek new ways of interacting with and using materials. They are free to choose materials and props for their play from a wide selection of resources.

Learning takes place as children interact with the environment, each other and staff. Activities and interest groups evolve according to the interests of the children. Staff encourage two way conversations and support each child to be an active and happy participant in all facets of Kindergarten life.

Group Times

Small groups form and re-form throughout the session, sometimes because the teacher has something specific to talk about with the children and sometimes because the teacher recognises a “teachable moment” having observed that something of importance is taking place. Large groups involving all children will be part of the day, such as at the end of the session or during transitions from play to meal time. During larger group activities, the children will engage in discussion, reflection, musical experiences such as playing instruments and singing, movement, drama, and literacy experiences such as finger-rhymes, puppetry and stories.

Portfolios, Projects & Program Plans | Making Learning Visible

Children's learning is documented and celebrated at the Kindergarten in many forms including individual portfolios, the program planning cycle and displays. Within the Kindergarten room, wall displays capture the children's learning, their interests, their words, and projects in progress.

The children's individual plans and portfolios are available for families to read and contribute to online via the Storypark secure portal. On enrolment at the Kindergarten you will receive an e-invitation providing the steps to follow to gain access. You can invite family and friends to share in Storypark from anywhere in the world. It is always exciting for everyone to see comments pop up from faraway places!

A hard copy of your child's portfolio is also located within the Kindergarten room so that children can readily access them. We invite you to look through your child's portfolio at the Kinder at any time to celebrate their learning with them. Both the Storypark history and hard copy portfolios are yours to retain as a record of your child's learning journey with us. For more information about Storypark visit www.storypark.com

In addition to individual plans and portfolios, we regularly post group program plans both online in Storypark and in the Kindergarten foyer. We invite you to contribute to our planning by commenting online via Storypark or adding to the “talking” tree in the Kindergarten room. These are both wonderful ways in which you can update us on your child's emerging strengths, goals and interests.

We also create project books to celebrate many aspects of Kinder. These books range from our Community Book (to celebrate those we regularly see at Kinder) to specific projects we are exploring together. These books are retained in the Kindergarten room so children can reflect on their learning and add to them over time. We invite you to view these books with the children in reflection together.

Projects are opportunities for engagement of the mind, critical reflection, collaboration, and a way to celebrate children, families and members of the community. During projects, teachers work alongside children in directing the research and compiling the knowledge they have gleaned to make learning visible.



All about Children | Positive Relationships & Supporting Wellbeing

We seek to develop warm, responsive and trusting relationships with all children. We deliver programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning.

We assist and support all children to self-manage their emotions and behaviour and develop a strong sense of wellbeing through positive interactions. We support children to develop the necessary skills and emotional intelligence to solve problems with constructive words rather than physical means of coping with conflict. We encourage children to develop empathy by reflecting on our actions, thinking about how others feel, and considering how we might solve a problem differently in the future.

Educators respect the rights of all children and work collaboratively to:

- *encourage all children to express themselves and their opinions*
- *support all children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem*
- *maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times*
- *offer positive guidance and encouragement to support behaviour and wellbeing*
- *celebrate the cultural and family values of all children*
- *promote the physical and intellectual development, strengths and abilities of each child*

Our approach to supporting wellbeing and guiding behaviour is further outlined in our Interactions with Children Policy which is available to read on our website at: <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>

Arrival & Departure

The red doors into the Kindergarten are accessed by keypad code to support safety and easy access for parents and carers. All families will be advised of the code at the beginning of the year.

When you arrive, please support your child to place their bag on the allocated hook in the foyer. We ask that you wait in the foyer until teaching staff open the door at both beginning and end of the session (unless otherwise instructed). Staff support this practice by raising the door blind to indicate the transition. When entering the Kindergarten room, please support your child to bring in their hat (a requirement during SunSmart season) and add their water bottle to the trolley before signing them in to the Attendance Book.

Parents and carers are welcome to access the Kindergarten room as needed for early collection. As a courtesy, however, please try to let the staff know if you will be arriving earlier than regular departure time.

Signing in and out of the Attendance Book

For safety and security reasons, children are required to be signed in and out of all sessions. This is a legal obligation under the Australian Education and Care Services Regulations. The arrival and departure time of the child must be documented and initialled every session. Please do not fill in the departure time until you have collected your child and please remember to sign your child in and out of every session.

Our Supervision of Children Policy

The safety and wellbeing of all children is our paramount concern – in particular at arrival and departure times when we rely on families to support our efforts to ensure adequate supervision of children. The responsibilities of families at arrival and departure times are outlined in our Supervision of Children Policy and summarised in this Handbook under the section headed “Safety at our Centre”.



Attendance

If your child is absent, please notify the Kindergarten via telephone (03 8672 9981) or by sending an email to office@albertparkkinder.com.au

Calendar of Events

We organise various events throughout the year. A welcome picnic is held for each group at the beginning of the year for all families and staff. During the year, our group representatives will also organise social opportunities outside of Kindergarten. At the end of the year we celebrate with an all of Kinder picnic in St Vincents Gardens.

Fundraising also plays a significant role in supporting the Kindergarten and building connection and family friendships. Our fundraising events receive wonderful support from both families and the broader community.

Our calendar of events is available to view on our website at: <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/calendar/>

Celebrations

Celebration is one of our core values and we invite you to share with us the events and occasions you celebrate as a family. We will seek to incorporate these into the Program through conversation with the children about what they would like to celebrate at Kindergarten, and the way in which they would like to celebrate. As the children lead this process, we expect each celebration to be unique. As such, this reflects that each child is unique in their way of understanding the world and their place in it and ensures that their thoughts and opinions are valued.

Throughout the year we will invite families into the Program for special celebrations such as cultural events, birthdays, performances by the children etc.

We celebrate:

- Welcome (*our year commences with a group welcome picnic event*)
- Cultural Days (*including our all of Kinder Celebration of Culture and Kindness Day in Term 1*)
- Easter & Christmas (*including our annual Family Sports Day & Egg Hunt + Christmas in the Park*)
- Mother's Day & Father's Day
- Seasons (*including exploring the 6 seasons of the people of the Kulin Nation*)
- Transitions as new adventures and opportunities
- Our support of Balibo Kindergarten, East Timor
- Our shared future with traditional custodians of the land
- Our community and each other
- Birthdays – something that is particularly special to the children!

We celebrate the birthdays of children very simply. A birthday crown is made, we sing "Happy Birthday" as a group, and a photo will be taken to capture this special memory. Family members of the birthday child are invited to come to Kindergarten to be part of the celebration and share their story of how special their child's birthday is to them.

Class Representatives

Each class has a family representative who will organise social events for your group outside the Kindergarten throughout the year. The Group Representative plays an important role in hosting a positive experience for all families at Kindergarten and celebrating the wonderful community in which we live, work and play. This is a role that is welcome to be shared, so please let us know if you would like to offer your support.



Communication

Discussing progress

Your child's progress at Kindergarten is very important to us. We recognise that you are your child's first teacher and we seek to learn from you so we can best support your child's learning journey. Our teachers want to share information about your child with you and will try to engage with you regularly.

We encourage you to check in with your teacher to discuss progress. If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress, please bring this to the attention of your teacher so that we can best support you and your child. Please let staff know you if you would like to make a meeting time for a discussion in private.

Family / Teacher Interviews

Family / teacher interviews are conducted at both year levels during Term 2. The interviews take place at the Kindergarten with some evening meeting times made available to support the attendance of working families. To support connection with families unable to attend in person, the opportunity of an interview via phone is available.

Keeping in touch

We always welcome family feedback which plays such an important role in the growth of our Kindergarten. We value effective communication and regular contact and connection.

Reminders, news, notices and permission slips will be forwarded to you by email or SMS via our EdSmart online communications system. Your child's learning experiences and individual program plans at Kindergarten will be shared via the Storypark online portfolio system and we encourage you to comment and share interests and stories from home and away.

Community

Balibo Kindergarten, East Timor



We support the Kindergarten in East Timor established by the Balibo House Trust in memory of the five Australian journalists who died there in 1975. We are very proud to contribute to the ongoing strengthening of the local community and to date, have raised more than \$10,000 for the children of Balibo. We celebrate our values of community, compassion and collaboration through our association with Balibo Kindergarten. We raise money at the end of each Term when children are invited to wear a dress up from home and bring a gold coin donation to support the children of Balibo.

Concerns | Our Commitment to Lifelong Learning

We are committed to ongoing strengthening and quality improvement of our service. Feedback from families plays a vital role in helping us to achieve this. Queries and concerns are always welcome. Your experience is our constant source of inspiration. Sharing your experience supports us to learn, strengthen, and plan effectively for the future. It is through our life-long learning and our curiosity that we continue to grow.

If you have a concern at any time relating to our policies, procedures or the Kindergarten in general, please contact our Administration Director. If you have any concerns or queries regarding your child's progress, please make a time with your teacher for a confidential discussion. Alternatively, you can raise your concern directly with our Administration Director by email at apkinderooffice@gmail.com

Procedures for submitting complaints or grievances are outlined in the relevant policy available on our website.



Creative Arts

The creative arts are essential to a quality education. Music, movement, art and drama provide children with an opportunity to express themselves creatively.

Art

Children are provided with a wide variety of materials and media in the art program from which they can freely choose to create.

Drama

During their time at Kindergarten, children will have the opportunity to dramatise songs, favourite stories and those they create, by performing in small plays or with puppets.

Music & Movement

At Kindergarten the children experience a developmental music program which includes movement and the development of concepts such as rhythm, beat, tempo, volume, tone and melody.



Food & Healthy Eating | Towards Zero Waste | We are Nut Free

Preparing food and the table, then eating together, is an important social ritual for us all. Teachers and children sit together to enjoy this pleasurable experience together sharing time and conversation.

What to bring? | Morning Tea & Lunch (3 year old Caterpillars & 4 year old Butterflies)

Please pack a healthy morning tea and lunch in a named container. The children will enjoy morning tea together at approximately 10am and then sit down for lunch shortly after midday group time.

What to bring? | Afternoon Tea (4 year old Butterflies)

In the 4 year old Butterflies group, children will enjoy afternoon tea at approximately 3pm. Families are invited to contribute a piece of fruit/vegetable each morning to the collection basket in the foyer for use in our shared afternoon tea platters. This approach helps us to encourage a sense of community and pride in sharing with others. Afternoon tea also provides opportunity for family participation. We invite parents/carers to join the children in the preparation and serving of afternoon tea by way of an online roster.

Caring for our health, our friends and our planet

We encourage re-use and recycling, care for the environment and care for our friends with allergies.

In consideration of those children with life-threatening allergies, **please do not send any food to Kindergarten that contains nuts or traces of nuts.**

Encouraging good health and wellbeing is an important part of our Kindergarten program. We ask that you please save any "treats" for home.

By avoiding processed foods and packaging we model good health and support our "towards zero waste" objective. All organic waste is welcome at Kinder and will be consumed by our grateful worms. All non-organic waste will return home in lunchboxes.

Our Nutrition & Active Play Policy is guided by the Department of Health publication entitled "*Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood.*" Our Policy includes lunchbox tips and recipe ideas for families developed in consultation with local Nutritionist, Lisa Minton.



Health & Wellbeing | Managing Medical Conditions, Illness & Injury

Regular attendance is important for all children, however, children who are unwell recover best at home. Please also be considerate of the health and wellbeing of other children and staff at Kindergarten. If your child has been ill in the night or is displaying symptoms of illness, please keep them home even if they want to come to Kindergarten.

If your child becomes ill or is injured at Kindergarten, we will make contact with you. In circumstances where an incident or injury has resulted in physical damage and/or a first aid response has been taken, an **Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Record** (IITI) will be completed in accordance with Department regulations and will require staff to seek your signature. You can view a copy of the form at the following link:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/sample-forms-and-templates>

Medical Condition Management

Management of medical conditions is taken very seriously at Kindergarten. Our staff are fully trained in accredited course code HLTAID004 covering First Aid and the use of Asthma Medication and EpiPens in addition to course code MHFA Mental Health First Aid. We are a gold level accredited workplace under the MHFA program.

We currently have children enrolled at the Kindergarten with Anaphylaxis and we do not allow nuts into the Kindergarten nor any products or packaging that may contain traces of nuts. We will communicate with all families in the relevant groups about any other specific allergies in the group.

If your child needs medication at Kindergarten you will be required to give written permission on our Medication form. Please note: We cannot legally give medicine to children unless authorised in writing.

If your child has an infectious disease, please let us know so we can inform others. If you are wondering how long they need to stay at home, the following table produced by the Department of Health & Human Services provides that information:

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

Immunisation

Legislation requires children to be fully vaccinated in order to access early childhood services. The only exemption to this is for children who have a documented medical reason provided by a medical professional supporting why they cannot be fully immunised. To fulfil our legal obligations, proof of immunisation in the form of an Immunisation History Statement must be provided prior to finalising enrolment at our Centre. Recent amendments to the Legislation further require us to request updated copies at 6 month intervals.

To obtain a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement please visit:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/how-get-immunisation-history-statement>

How can families participate?

There are many ways for families to become involved at Kindergarten that are both enjoyable and valuable for all. The children love having you spend some time in session. We extend an invitation to families to:

- stay and play with children during a session
- read with children in our calm corner
- help prepare afternoon tea with the children (*4 year old Butterflies Group*)
- join us on excursions
- share your culture and help us celebrate with you
- share your knowledge with the children and staff in a presentation
- let us know your skills and interests so you can be involved in the Program
- be part of the voluntary Parent Committee of Management or assist on a sub-committee established for a specific purpose (*eg: Fundraising Events*)
- provide us with feedback

If you would like to take advantage of any of these opportunities at any time simply let your teacher know so we can incorporate your participation into our planning.



Incursions & Excursions

Throughout the year, the Program is enhanced by professional performers and specialists coming into the Kindergarten to involve the children in something unique such as a drama workshop or an animal experience. Towards the end of the year, we will transport the children by private coach bus to excursion venues outside Kindergarten. On both occasions, we welcome parents and carers. You will be asked to sign permission slips for all excursions and will be notified in advance of the details. A risk assessment is prepared in advance of all excursions and is available for you to view at any time.

Walking Tours

Each term the children will participate in walking excursions which include visits to the library and local community. An annual permission slip will be distributed on enrolment and once again, families will be notified in advance of the details and invited to accompany us on our walks.

The Working with Children Check | Our commitment to a child safe environment

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and to that end, we request that all adults volunteering to participate in the program and accompanying children on excursion have a valid Working with Children Check. There is no application fee applicable to volunteers and you can apply online at the following link:

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply>

Messy Play | Active Play | Water Play | Clothing



We encourage and support children to be physically active at Kindergarten in all weather – both indoors and outside. We also encourage children to be messy because sensory experiences are essential to learning. Children will play in the mud, in sand, with paint and many wet substances. We provide smocks for the children when painting but often their creative urge is stronger than staying clean. Water play provides a relaxing and explorative medium for children. Playing with water or messy sensory materials is part of our Program so we ask that you support these practices by releasing children from responsibility to keep clothing clean. Kindergarten is a messy place because young children learn through making lots of mess!

Please send your child to Kindergarten in clothes that can take mess and shoes suitable for climbing and active play (please, no thongs). We also ask that you pack a spare set of weather appropriate clothing in your child's bag each session.

Our Policies & Procedures

Our Policy Manual helps guide the operation of our Kindergarten and outlines both what families can expect from us and what we expect from families. Policies provide information about what we do and, in some cases, what we cannot do. Many of our policies exist to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care such as:

- Interactions with Children
- Emergency Management and Evacuation
- Management of Medical Conditions

Our Policy Manual is regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with families. A complete set of our policies is available to view at all times on our website at: <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>



Respect & Wellbeing for all

We actively promote respect, acceptance and gratitude amongst the children, staff and families. We seek as adults to model respectful behaviours and attitudes in our dealings with each other. We expect that we will all play a part in contributing to a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment with mutual respect. We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Law to provide a workplace that is healthy and safe – both physically and mentally. The Kindergarten's commitment to wellbeing is embodied in our Code of Conduct, our statement of partnership titled "*We All Play A Part*", and our Occupational Health and Safety policies.

Safety at our Centre | Promoting the Child Safe Standards

We are dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment. To do this we rely on the support of families for **we are all responsible for the safety of children** and we must all comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>

Our Supervision of Children Policy outlines the responsibilities of families with regard to providing a safe environment for all children as follows:

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- *ensuring educators are aware that their children have arrived at or departed from the service*
- *ensuring that doors and gates, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit*
- *being aware of movement of other children near gates and doors when entering or exiting the service*
- *enabling educators to supervise children at all times by making arrangements to speak with them outside program hours*
- *supervising their own children before signing them into the program and after they have signed out*
- *supervising other children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service*

We thank you for your support in helping us to ensure the safety of all children at Kindergarten.

Settling In

Most children will have a time when they feel insecure leaving their parents. Separation anxiety is treated with support and respect at Kindergarten. We encourage you to stay with your child for as long as it takes to settle them. We are here to help discuss different strategies to support your child at all times. We are dedicated to making your child's day at Kindergarten happy and safe and we will contact you if we are unable to achieve this.

Staff

We are committed to attracting the very best educators to implement our educational programs and we support the lifelong learning of all staff with opportunities to pursue professional development both in Australia and overseas. Our team are fully qualified and undertake ongoing training to continually develop their practice.

SunSmart

We are a SunSmart Kindergarten which means that we use a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities when UV levels reach 3 and above (the level that can damage skin and eyes). One of these measures is the requirement for children to wear hats when outdoors from 1 September through to 30 April, so please remember to pack a hat with your child's belongings during that period. We ask that you please apply sunscreen to your child before the session and we keep a bottle available in the foyer if you forget at home. The playground is covered with sun-shades during the warmer months as a further precaution against the harmful rays of the sun. In addition to protecting children and staff from the harmful effects of the sun's ultraviolet radiation, we are also committed to ensuring children and staff are provided opportunity for healthy UV exposure to maintain vitamin D levels. We recognise the importance of modelling SunSmart behaviours as adults and promote the wearing of hats by both staff and volunteers (including on excursions).



Sustainability – Caring for our World – Proud to be Carbon Neutral

Our Philosophy reflects our understanding that we all benefit from connection to nature. Children across all groups participate in our environmental responsibility initiatives. This includes gardening, cooking, reading meters, engaging with our worm farms, caring for Tim the turtle, and celebrating our carbon neutrality. We provide opportunities for children to appreciate and understand the natural environment and encourage them to take positive action to develop strategies and skills for a sustainable future. Caring for our world is a key strength of our Program and has received recognition as winner of the 2019 Cities Power Partnership Award, finalist in the 2018 Premier's Sustainability Awards, and celebration as Australia's first carbon neutral early childhood service.

Toys & Treasures

While we encourage children to bring found objects, their stories, photos and comforters to Kindergarten, we discourage toys from home. It can be challenging to look after special toys during session, the loss or damage of which may cause distress. We provide opportunities for all children to celebrate toys or treasures from home throughout the course of the year with our Treasure Box.

Treasure Box (all groups)

Throughout the year, the children from all groups will have the opportunity to take our Treasure Box home with them to select something special to put inside and bring back to Kinder to present to the group.

The Adventures of Yawa the Turtle (4 year old Butterflies)

Yawa the Turtle is a special toy that the children in our 4 year old group will each have the opportunity to take home for a sleepover. Yawa loves spending time with you and has a special diary to record your adventures together for children to present to the group on return to Kinder. Yawa's name is derived from the language of the Kulin Nations and it's meaning is a special one to all turtles – "swim".

Transitions | to Kinder to School and beyond...



Families and teachers aim to support children to be ready to embrace the exciting new experiences and challenges they will face when they begin school. Components of school readiness generally include children's social-emotional competence (cooperation and self-control), their language (verbal and comprehensions) and their motor coordination and physical health. The development of these skills begins early in a child's life and is dependent on the rate of each individual child's maturity. Families are central in providing the context in which such competencies can develop.

Kindergarten prepares your child for school, not by teaching through structured worksheets, but by encouraging and supporting the development of positive dispositions to learning in each child that will hold them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Before children transition to school, they will have developed skills to co-operate, to lead and follow, make friendships, and listen to and celebrate the views of others. They will be confident in their identity and will have experienced the joy of belonging to a group and being part of a supportive community. They will be on their way to becoming excellent communicators in a variety of modes and they will have the foundations necessary for further learning in literacy, mathematics and science.

Every Primary School delivers their own unique orientation program. We support this process by hosting Prep teacher visits and sharing with schools a confidential Transition Statement about your child. This document is compiled by both teacher, child and family during Term 4 and supports your child's Prep teacher by summarising strengths, interests, and strategies to support learning and wellbeing.



Literacy and Numeracy

At Kindergarten we encourage interest in literacy and numeracy by providing an environment rich in opportunities to lay the foundations of further competency. For example, drawing and painting, physical activities that improve coordination, stories, songs and rhymes, magazines, posters, games, name writing and letter writing to friends, family and community.

Our teachers are often asked what can be undertaken at home to support reading, writing and STEM development. Regularly reading together and activities such as cooking where measuring and mixing are involved are great ways to encourage and support these skills.

What to bring to Kindergarten?

The start of Kindergarten is an exciting and magical time! It is helpful to come prepared.

We have put together a checklist of things to bring with you session:

- a named bag
- a named drink bottle containing water
- a named hat (bucket or legionnaire style)
- a named change of seasonally-appropriate clothing (including socks and underwear)
- a named lunch-box containing your food



A reminder to please send your child to Kindergarten in clothes that can take mess and shoes suitable for climbing and active play (ie: no thongs).

Thank you!

We thank you for choosing Albert Park Preschool as part of your child's learning journey.

We look forward to creating wonderful memories together.



Where to go for more information

Web References:

- Our Policies <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>
- Our Calendar of Events <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/calendar/>
- Latest News <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/news/>
- Placing your child on our wait list <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/enrolment/>
- All about the National Quality Framework www.acecqa.gov.au
- The National Quality Standard
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-07/RevisedNQSHandoutA4.pdf>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veylframework.pdf>
- Belonging Being and Becoming – Information for Families
https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf
- More about the Reggio Emilia Approach <https://www.reggioaustralia.org.au/>
- The Child Safe Standards <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>
- When your child has an infection, the following table from the Health Department will tell you if you can come to Kindergarten
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>
- Staying Healthy – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education & Care Services
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>
- Get Up & Grow – Healthy Eating & Physical Activity for Early Childhood
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection>
- Connections – A Resource for Early Childhood Educators about Children's Wellbeing
<https://everymind.imgix.net/assets/Uploads/connections-resource-book.pdf>

You can download a copy of the latest version of this Booklet on our website at the following link:

<http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/>