



WELCOME TO OUR FAMILIES, joining us in 2022

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Yackandandah kindergarten.

We are delighted that you have chosen Yackandandah Kindergarten for your child and we look forward to your family's involvement with our Centre throughout the year.

Please don't hesitate to ask staff if you have any queries and/or suggestions. We are always happy to help and improve our practice.

Our staff team currently comprises of a Director, an Educational Leader, Teachers & Educators with qualifications in Early Childhood Education, plus an Administration Officer. We all have a strong commitment to social justice and equal opportunity principles. The Kindergarten's staffing is determined by the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD). Children's enrolment figures are used to determine the level of staffing necessary to maintain the correct adult to child ratio. This means that staffing can change annually. To ensure that our staffing levels are maintained, it is important that all children attend regularly.

The kindergarten has strong links with Upper Murray Family Care, Gateway Health and the services of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and a Maternal & Child Health Nurse and local schools. During the year, we host university Early Childhood students as well as students from Beechworth Secondary College also attend for work experience and on occasions we also have volunteers. Staff are on-duty at the kindergarten from Monday to Friday, 8.15am until 4.00pm. The After Kinder Care Program [operated by Yack Primary School on kinder premises] runs for 3yo & 4yo's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 2.00pm – 6.00pm.

Settling your child into kindergarten

Some children need a lot of reassurance to settle into kindergarten, whilst others throw themselves whole heartedly into activities straight away. There are many individual differences. Whilst families know their child best, the teachers understand general patterns of behaviour, so between us an individual process for managing separation can be arranged.

Our policy and a practice, which has proven very successful in allowing children to settle quickly into their classroom and encourage their self-help skills, is that parents drop-off and farewell their child at the door and into the teacher's care. At day's end, COVID restrictions permitting, we welcome parents to come into the classroom to check their child's locker, collect their bag and greet their child before exiting through the classroom's playground exit door.

Families are always welcome to stay at the kindergarten until they feel that their child is ready to stay without them; have this conversation with your child's teacher. However, please be assured that the staff are very experienced at sensitively handling any distress that children may experience when separating from a family member for the first time. Please have confidence in us! In the 'settling in' stage it is a good idea to leave a phone number where you can be reached, just in case! We would always ring you if your child does not settle quickly.

Should your child be upset when you leave, please do not hesitate to ring the Centre when you get home.

Starting Kindergarten is a big step in a child's life. It is often the first big step outside the familiar home and family environment.

The child learns to:

- See themselves as an individual
- Become part of a group
- Take turns with toys and equipment
- Find out and remember where things are
- Trust other children and accept their help
- Explore and experiment with a wide range of interesting experiences, many of which may not be familiar
- Begin to be aware of someone else's perspective
- Be caring and supportive of other children
- Come to know and feel secure in the care of new adults
- Make friends with children of their own age group [a very specialised skill]
- Express their ideas and feelings
- Share adult attention
- Relate to other children as the people they have most contact with
- Assert their own rights and learn to negotiate in acceptable ways
- Begin to see themselves as part of a wider community

When starting full time kinder your child needs to bring.....

- A hat (broad brim style). Our Kinder is a sun smart centre and children are required to wear hats when outside between September and April (and if the UV is over 3). The Kinder also encourages the use of sunglasses. We have kinder hats for sale for \$18.00 each. (Please see Jennie in the Office to order/purchase)
Please name all clothes and possessions, especially shoes, socks, hats and bags.
- A bag, backpack or case big enough for the child's spare clothes, lunchbox, drink bottle, hat etc.
- Fruit or vegetables for the two health snack times each day which are separate to their lunch and left in the basket on the verandah.
- A named drink bottle filled with WATER ONLY. Please do not send cordial, fruit juice in a bottle or in a fruit box.

- Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at kinder. Staff will top this up during the course of the day. If you prefer your child to use a specific brand, please supply same to their teacher.
- A separate lunch container which contains some or all of the following: sandwich, fruit, salad vegetables, cheese, yogurt, dried/savoury biscuits. Sandwiches can contain any fillings except for those containing nut products.

In cases where the children might cook foods as part of their program or participate in a party etc celebration at kinder, you will need to provide an alternative food item for your child to eat if they have an allergy or intolerance. We suggest that you bring a batch at the start of the term which can be frozen at kinder and brought out at such events.

- Some spare clothes – just in case. This is a must for all children!

Family participation

We are committed to working in partnership with families and you are encouraged and welcome to participate in every aspect of kindergarten life. We believe families are important to children for many reasons; each child comes from within an individual and unique family group.

We share with families the responsibility of the care and education of their young children, as we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Your child will benefit from your interest and participation and by talking and working together, parents and teachers can help each other to appreciate each child's individual needs, characteristics and interests.

As a busy centre we are always grateful for any voluntary help that you can provide. Possibilities for help include reading stories to children, assisting with small group activities, gardening, preparing materials & resources, cleaning up and repairing equipment, coming along on excursions as a parent helper. Sharing skills such as sewing, painting or music have been very much enjoyed this year and will always be very welcome. You will need to supply kinder with a WWCC and Medicare COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate.

Kinder Sub-Committee of Management

The Sub-Committee of Management is represented by the YPS Principal, the Kindergarten Director, Kinder Administration Officer, 4 - 6 kinder parent representatives and a YPS Council parent representative – all of whom work together for the management of the kindergarten.

Interested parents are encouraged to join the Committee of Management. Areas of discussion such as the educational program, any special events, family and community concerns are talked about as well as the usual 'business' matters like fundraising, maintenance and development of the Centre building and grounds. Each November, an end of year meeting is held, with nominations being called for two 3yo and two 4yo Kinder parent representatives on the incoming year's committee. Meetings are friendly and informal and are a great way to meet new people and make a contribution.

Your support will be hugely appreciated by the staff, as we see children's education as a team effort.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Kindergarten for 1 hour's duration. Joining the meetings by Webex is also an option.

Parents are always welcome. We are keen to have your ideas and support in any capacity that you feel you are able to help.

The Parents & Friends Group participates in fundraising, maintenance, working bees, bush kinder development and social events etc and we always welcome our kinder community's interest, skills and participation.

Communication

Staff are always available to talk with families and we hope that you will be comfortable approaching us at any time. If you have an issue or concern that you would like to discuss more privately, please let us know and we will arrange a more appropriate time to do so. You are welcome to ring or email the centre to arrange a meeting at any time yackandandah.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au. However, we would ask that if you have a query that may take some time to address, please contact us outside of session times.

Sign-in sheets are placed on the blue table in the Kinder forecourt each morning. If pick up and drop off arrangements are different from normal, we ask you to write in the name [and phone number] of the person concerned. If pick up arrangements change during the day, please ring follow up with an email to the office yackandandah.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au and let a staff member know. Parents must sign out their child before leaving the centre at pick up time. If you'd like to add an additional person as an authorised person, you must come into the kindergarten and see the Administrator to add this to your child's enrolment form.

Newsletters are published monthly; we encourage families to nominate to receive these electronically rather than in paper copy, to save the environment. These usually contain information about coming events, the kindergarten program, requests for assistance, notes about our service, samples of children's work, etc. Lockers are provided for each child and these should be checked daily for notices, newsletters and receipts from the Office.

Other media forums through which we keep our families informed and can engage in dialogue are via email, our website, *Kindyhub* and our Kinder Facebook (this is a closed group).

Program Times

- **3yo Funded Programs:**
 - 3yo Monday/Wednesday/Friday Program | 9.00am – 2.00pm
 - 3yo Wednesday/Friday Program | 8.30am – 4.00pm
- **4yo Funded Programs:**
 - Monday & Thursday Group Program | Monday: 8.30am – 4.00pm / Thursday: 8.15am – 3.45pm
 - Tuesday & Thursday Group Program | Tuesday: 8.30am – 4.00pm / Thursday: 8.30am – 4.00pm
- **Non-Funded Bush Kinder Programs:**
 - Mondays | 8.15am – 3.45pm
 - Tuesdays | 8.15am – 3.45pm
- **Non-Funded Stand-alone 4yo School Readiness Program Day:**
 - Wednesdays | 8.30am – 4.00pm
 - Fridays | 8.30am – 4.00pm

Toys

Please don't let your child bring toys to kindergarten. Sometimes it may be appropriate to bring something special/interesting to show us, but then it needs to be taken home by the parent and not left at kindergarten.

Children's Clothing

It is recommended that children wear seasonal appropriate clothes which allow them to be actively involved in all aspects of the kindergarten program. Smocks are provided for art activities, but are not always sufficient protection for messy activities.

Clothing and shoes, which enable the children to play safely and go to the toilet independently, are most suitable. T-Shirt, windcheater and bucket hat uniform items can be ordered/purchased through the Kinder – see Jennie in the office or find the order form on our website. Please always pack a spare change of clothes in your child's bag [including undies and socks].

Bush Kinder Clothing – to reduce the opportunity for scratches and bug bites, children are to be clothed in closed toe shoes/boots [gumboots in winter months] and wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants. Please also apply sunscreen prior to their arrival at kinder. [for wet weather, each child will wear a kinder-supplied waterproof jacket and pants]

Pupil-Free Days

These will always be gazetted in our newsletters and via Kinder Facebook, office-sent emails and *Kindyhub* communications from staff.

One particular pupil-free day each year is the Statewide Transition Day for 4yo children entering primary school the following year. On this day, kinder holds its Orientation Morning for new families enrolling at our kinder for the first time. On this day [usually the first Tuesday of December] normal kinder programs scheduled for the day will not be held. Parents will need to make alternative care arrangements for their child. This date will be Tuesday, 6th December in 2022. Other pupil free days may be scheduled during the year and families will be notified in advance.

Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the kinder with updated Management Plans and asthma medication & spacer and/or EpiPens for their child. We do hold spare medication at the kinder but this is for emergency cases where the child's own medication has not had effect. Such Management Plan documentation is usually reviewed by your medical practitioner on an annual basis. This information is essential for staff who are all briefed on every child's medical condition and required treatment.

You will next hear from the kinder ...

Mid-January 2022 – when a newsletter will be emailed to you.

During the 2021 Christmas/New Year holidays, the office will be closed until 28th January 2022. You can leave phone messages and emails during this period as Admin Officer Jennie and Director Marisel will check on a weekly basis during this period and respond to urgent/important matters.

Looking forward to seeing everyone starting the week of 31st January.

22 December 2021

**Education begins the moment we see children as innately wise & capable beings.
Only then can we play along in their world.**

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