

# Family Information Book Kindergarten 2026



bestchance is a not-for-profit dedicated to creating lasting change for children, families, and communities.

Guided by our vision to make a real and lasting impact, we provide quality care, support and education that empowers every child to thrive.

## Welcome families!

Welcome to bestchance! We are so happy to have you join us.

#### **About Us**

At bestchance, we are driven by our commitment to inclusion and equity, ensuring every child can grow, learn, and thrive. Through quality education, care, therapy, and family support, we create safe and inspiring spaces that empower children and strengthen families. Committed to making a real, lasting difference, our purpose is to help every child overcome challenges, achieve their full potential, and build brighter futures for themselves and their communities.

## **Our Purpose**

It is to provide care, support and education to children, families and communities to reach their full potential. We believe strong support systems empower families, nurture children, and lead to healthier, connected communities. Everything we do is driven by our dedication to creating lasting positive change in the lives of those we serve.

#### **Our Vision**

It is to make a real and lasting impact on every child, family, and community we support. We are committed to creating brighter futures through meaningful solutions that empower individuals and strengthen relationships. By supporting children and families, we pave the way for thriving, resilient communities and lifelong growth.

#### **Our Values**

We are guided by our values of safety, integrity, accountability, respect, inclusion, innovation, improvement, collaboration and courage. We prioritise physical, emotional, and cultural safety, holding ourselves accountable to deliver the best outcomes. We foster trust, encourage innovation, and work together with purpose and courage to create inclusive and supportive environments for all.



## **Service Philosophy**

Each service has its own philosophy that reflects the vision, purpose, and values of bestchance. The service philosophy will also reflect the beliefs, values and expectations of the service staff, children, families, and community. This is displayed at the kindergarten, and we encourage you to read it. You are welcome to have a conversation with kindergarten staff about how the philosophy informs program delivery.

The kindergarten philosophy provides a solid foundation for practice and guides program and curriculum decisions. It is the 'why' behind how the service works.

The kindergarten philosophy aims to provide a shared vision that outlines clear intentions about what is important for children and families. This creates a positive climate that leads to quality outcomes.

The philosophy is reviewed by the kindergarten each year to ensure it reflects the views of current staff, families, management, and community. We encourage you to contribute to the philosophy review to support a collaborative community and strong family service partnerships.



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## We are committed to child safety and wellbeing.

bestchance is committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children. Our zero tolerance for child abuse ensures all children, including those who are vulnerable, are safe, respected and valued.



You will find our Child Safety and Wellbeing Commitment on display at your child's service and on our website <u>Access Our Policies & Publications |</u>
Bestchance



At bestchance, we acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands across Victoria where our services are located.

We also pay respect to ancestors and elders, past, present and future.

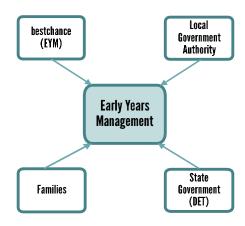
bestchance is committed to honoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples' unique culture and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, and their rich contribution to our society.

## **Early Years Management**

Early Years Management (EYM) is the leading platform to achieve improved outcomes for all children, through the delivery of world-class, accessible Early Childhood Education and Care services (ECEC). EYM is built on a four-way partnership, where the partners work together to deliver quality early education for all children.

These partners are:

- Families
- Approved Providers bestchance (EYM)
- Local Government Authority (LGA) / Council
- State Government The Department of Education (DE)



## Our role as Approved Provider

bestchance as the Approved Provider, undertakes the day-to-date management of the service which includes:

- Ensuring compliance with the National Law and Regulations and Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Recruiting and management of appropriately qualified staff and supporting their ongoing professional development.
- Ensuring service viability by setting fees and acquitting funding to DE and LGAs.
- Ensuring delivery of high-quality educational programs, aligned with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Other operational requirements such as structuring programs (timetables) that meet the needs of the community, managing enrolments and developing best practice policies that reflect the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and Regulations.

#### **Valuing Family & Community**

Our early years communities are not only made up of the children but encompass the whole family. Family members are welcome at our service at any time. There are many ways in which parents and family members can be involved in and contribute to the kindergarten experience.

#### 2026 Term Dates

#### Sessional Kinder

	Term Commences	Term Ends
Term 1	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> January^	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April
Term 2	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June
Term 3	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> September
Term 4	Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December

Please note:

An orientation session is arranged before a child starts attending the service in order to provide the best possible start for the child and their family.

Orientation also allows educators a chance to discuss information on the child's enrolment form with families in a smaller group environment. Families will be informed of starting dates and times before your Childs commencement date.

## Child free days

Please note the below schedule for 2026 service closure dates and child free days. Your Childs kindergarten program will not be running on the below dates.

Child free day	
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Set up day for educators
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> January	Organisational Day
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Educator professional development day (includes Mandatory Child Protection Training)
Wednesday 12th August	Educator professional development day
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	Pack up day for educators

Please note:

The first two days of Term 1 will be child free for educators. The last day of Term 4 will be child free for educators to pack up the service.

For Educator professional development days and pack up day, families will receive reminders via SMS, starting 4 weeks prior to the planned closure dates. A community post announcement will also be made on our parent communication platform 2 days prior to the closure date.

<sup>^3</sup>YO Groups – children may only begin 3YO kindergarten once they have turned three.



## 2026 Public Holidays

Holiday	Date
Labour Day	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Good Friday & Easter falls during Term 1 school holidays	Friday 3rd April to Monday 6th April
King's Birthday	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June
Day before AFL Grand Final Day	Subject to AFL schedule (likely 25/09/2025)
Melbourne Cup Day	Tuesday 3rd November









## Starting Kinder

At the start of the year, an Orientation or small group timetable may be developed by bestchance to assist your child to settle into kindergarten.

Our timetable is designed to meet family needs and to give children time to learn the routines, get to know the educators and other children. We will collaborate with you to find the best way to introduce your child to the kindergarten.

Starting kindergarten can be extremely exciting for some children but could also cause feelings of anxiety. Here are a few ways you can help your child feel comfortable with starting kindergarten:

- In the weeks before kindergarten starts, engage in some general conversations with your child about kindergarten; what they might do at kinder, things they might play with, new friends they will meet.
- Attend Orientation sessions or social events organised at the kindergarten prior to your child's attendance to ensure they feel comfortable in the kindergarten environment.
- Allow your child to choose their own kindergarten bag and lunch box.

#### Plan to help your child to settle in on their first day.

Some things you may choose to do include:

- Help them to find their own bag hook/locker.
- Introduce your child to the educators.
- Say hello to some of the other children and families.
- Familiarise your child with the kindergarten environment; have a look around together.
- Encourage your child to try an activity when they feel ready.
- Once you feel it is a suitable time to leave, always say goodbye and reassure your child that you will return.
- If your child becomes upset or distressed keep going more often than not, they stop as soon as you are out of sight. Rest assured that educators will phone you if your child does not settle.

## Our arrival procedure

- Parents/guardians must sign their child 'in' each session in the Attendance Record with the first name and surname of person. The exact time of arrival is to be recorded, not the session time (e.g. 9:07am).
- In warm weather, please apply sunscreen to your child. You can apply at home before coming in, or feel free to use the sunscreen at the service.
- Encourage your child to put their bag where it belongs.
- Let the educators know if there is any information they should know for the day e.g.
  details of any other person authorized to collect your child as listed on the
  enrolment form (grandparent etc.) if your child is tired, etc. and say goodbye when
  your child is settled.

## Our collection procedure

- Parents/guardians must sign their child 'out' of the kindergarten each session in the
  Attendance Record with their first name and surname. (Please let authorised persons
  know they will be required to present photo identification to the educators at the
  service) The exact time of collection is to be recorded, not the session time (e.g.
  3:30pm).
- Educators are not permitted to release a child to any person not listed in the child's Enrolment Record. If collection details change throughout the session time, parents must advise educators prior to your child being released to the authorised person. A phone call to the service would be sufficient notification.
- Parents, guardians, and educators are required to follow procedures for unauthorised collection of children as outlined in the bestchance Delivery and Collection of Children policy.

## Collecting children on time

It is not acceptable for families to collect their children late on a regular basis.

Families need to collect their children on time. Educators cannot complete their additional tasks when children are collected late. Please telephone the educators to let them know if you will be late so that they can reassure your child that you are on your way.

If the educators do not hear from you, and they are not able to contact you, emergency contacts will be called to collect a child who is not picked up on time.

If emergency contacts do not answer the telephone, educators will call bestchance, who will advise on contacting police.

There is also the possibility of a late collection charge being invoiced to families who are frequently late collecting their child. (Please refer to our Fees policy)

#### **Child Safe Standards**

Our services are committed to upholding Victoria's Child Safe Standards, which ensure that every child is safe, supported, and protected while in our care. These standards guide all aspects of our work, including how we create inclusive environments, respond to concerns, manage risk, and build strong, respectful relationships with families. We expect all staff, volunteers, and visitors to behave in ways that always prioritise children's safety and wellbeing. By working together and communicating openly, families and educators help maintain a learning community where every child feels secure, valued, and empowered.

## National Model Code and Digital Safety

Our services follow the National Model Code, which includes clear expectations for safe, respectful, and responsible Behaviour in digital environments. Even at the early learning level, children are beginning to explore technology, and it is important that they learn simple habits that protect their wellbeing online. The Code guides our approach to using digital tools safely, supporting children to understand privacy, kindness, and appropriate online interactions in age-appropriate ways. Families play an important role by reinforcing these expectations at home, helping to ensure that all children develop healthy, safe, and positive digital Behaviour from the very beginning of their learning journey.

All families and visitors must not use personal mobile devices to take images or videos of children whilst they are in our services.

For more information National Model Code Taking Images and Videos.pdf









## What to Bring







Please clearly name ALL of your child's belongings, including:

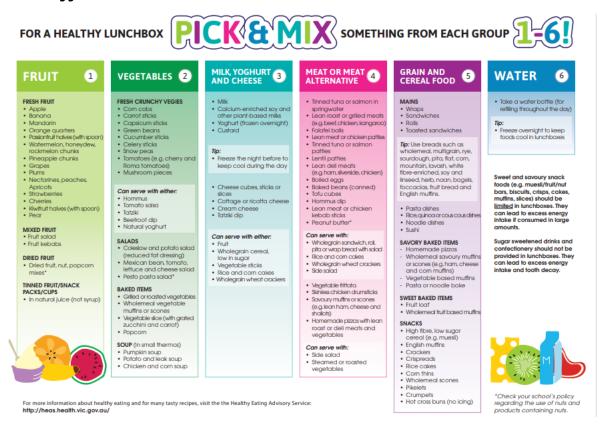
- A large **bag/backpack**
- Healthy food to eat at snack/lunch time and a drink of water. If
  items require refrigeration, please include a 'cold' block in your
  child's lunchbox, as we are unable to keep individual lunches in the
  kindergarten's fridge.
- A sun hat in either a 'wide brim' (7.5cm brim) or 'bucket' hat (5cm brim) which shades the child's face, neck and ears whenever the UV level reach 3 or above (typically from mid-August to 30 April) as per our Sun Protection policy.
- A coat and beanie on cool/wet days as children will still go outside.
- Footwear shoes, boots, runners (thongs or crocs are not recommended as they are unsafe on outdoor equipment).
   Gumboots are excellent for outdoors in winter, please send alternate footwear for indoors.
- Wear comfortable play clothes, so children can manage themselves, as they will participate in many messy activities throughout the year!
- Pack a spare change of clothes in case of accidents. Sometimes
  the children may get wet or dirty during the session. Toilet trained
  children in an unfamiliar environment may still have toileting
  accidents and most children prefer to change into their own
  clothes.

## Food at kindergarten

Children are encouraged to eat when they are hungry rather than at set mealtimes. You are requested to supply healthy snacks and lunch for your child.

Your service will let you know if they are educating and caring for any children with allergies and may request that you avoid packing certain food items (e.g. nuts or eggs).

Some suggestions for health snacks and lunch include:







#### **Enrolment Records**

The bestchance Central Enrolments team are located at our Support Office in Glen Waverley they are responsible for collecting all enrolment information from families. This includes the following:

- Completed enrolment forms.
- Australian Immunisation History Statement
- Medical Management Plan (if applicable)
- Court orders (if applicable)

Please notify us via email at <u>enrolments@bestchance.org.au</u> if custody arrangements or any other enrolment details change throughout the year.

All personal information collected is maintained in a strictly confidential manner. Enrolment records and accompanying documentation are stored in a secure, locked location.

#### **Immunisation**

To finalise your child's enrolment, you must provide bestchance with an Immunisation History Statement that shows your child is up to date with immunisations, on an immunisation catch-up schedule or has a medical condition preventing immunisation.

Please note: The Maternal Child Health Book is not acceptable proof of your child's immunisation. For further information in regard to the No Jab, No Play law, please visit: <a href="https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play">betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play</a>

#### Kinder Enrolment Portal

Bestchance manages completion of enrolment records via an Enrolments Portal. Please notify us of any changes to your personal details via email to <a href="mailto:enrolments@bestchance.org.au">enrolments@bestchance.org.au</a>. We will update your records and inform the service of the change(s).

If an emergency arises with your child, it is especially important that we have up-to-date contact details so we can contact you immediately.

## Family communication platform

Each family will receive an invite to join our online communication platform Kinderloop when your child commences kindergarten. The invite will be sent to Parent #1 listed on the enrolment form. Once the invite is accepted Parent #1 is then the allocated Admin for the account and can invite additional family members to view their child's profile.

Kinderloop is a digital platform that helps parents and educators stay connected with their children's learning and development, especially in early childhood education

settings. It serves as a communication tool between families and educators, providing a space where families can:

- 1. **Stay Informed**: Parents can view updates on their child's activities, milestones, and progress within their educational setting.
- 2. **Engage with Learning**: Families can comment on or ask questions about their child's learning experiences, which fosters meaningful interactions between parents and teachers.
- 3. **Share Moments**: Parents can upload photos, videos, and stories about their child's activities at home, creating a shared space for both parents and educators to understand the child's growth and development.
- 4. **Track Development**: The platform often includes features for tracking developmental milestones, allowing families to see how their child is progressing over time and how those milestones align with educational goals.
- 5. **Privacy and Control**: Kinderloop gives families control over who sees the content. Parents can invite specific people (such as relatives) to view their child's updates, ensuring privacy and personalised sharing.

Overall, Kinderloop enhances family involvement in a child's educational journey by providing transparency, collaboration, and a platform for celebrating progress together.



#### **Medical & Health Information**

#### **Medical Conditions**

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, allergy or specific health care need, a medical action plan must be provided to the enrolment team prior to your child starting.

This plan must be written and signed by a registered medical practitioner.

Any medication must also be available at the service each day the child is in attendance. The child's educator will also complete a risk minimisation and communication plan in consultation with the parent/guardian.

Please understand children cannot commence until all completed documentation has been submitted and been processed by the Enrolment team.

#### **Medication**

It is a legal requirement that your educators be provided with any medication required.

The medication must be:

- In its original container/package, clearly showing the dosage requirements.
- Within the expiry date.
- Labelled with your child's full name.
- For non-prescription medication, please write your child's name on the medication.
- For prescription medication, please ensure the chemist label is affixed, and dosage instructions are legible.



Please note – for medication to be administered to your child whilst at kindergarten, the medication record must be fully completed by a parent or authorised person each day medication is required.

#### Accidents & Illness at the Service

- If your child is hurt or becomes sick at our services, the educators will call you as soon as possible to talk about arranging for your child to be collected if necessary.
- Any time a child has a bump or knock to the head, educators will always call you. You
  can then decide whether or not you wish to collect your child from kindergarten.
- If educators cannot contact you, they will call the emergency contacts you have nominated on your enrolment form. These are the people you have given permission to collect your child from kindergarten if there is an emergency or they become sick.
   It is particularly important to let educators know if there are any changes to emergency contact information.
- If a child is involved in an accident or incident at kindergarten or is thought to be seriously ill, and the educators believe urgent medical help is required, they will call for an ambulance straight away. Please be aware that the cost of ambulance trips can be expensive, and you will be responsible for any costs occurred.

 All serious incidents and accidents are reported to the Department of Education within 24 hours.

#### Illness

If your child is unwell, please keep them at home until they are feeling better. This will assist in limiting the spread of infection to other children.

Please advise the kindergarten immediately, should your child be diagnosed with an infectious illness. In this case, the kindergarten must display a notice to inform other families, as required under the 'Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011'. Children will need to remain at home for the prescribed time on the exclusion table displayed at the kindergarten.

Under the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), all identifying information will remain confidential in accordance with Privacy laws.

Should your child be absent for any reason, please call the service directly to advise.

## **Emergency Drills**

Throughout the year, your ECEC service will hold emergency drills, which will occur at any time of the day. These are conducted in a well-organised and orderly manner. Fire Wardens will be trained in using the fire extinguishers that are in the service. An emergency evacuation plan will be displayed at your service, and available at any time on request.

#### **Early Childhood Professionals**

All bestchance services operate within the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

All kindergarten educators are trained and hold appropriate Early Childhood qualifications, relevant to their employment position. All educators working with children have approved regulatory training in First Aid, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma, Mandatory Child Protection reporting and Child Safe Standards.

All educators hold a current and valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) or are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

## The Kindergarten Program

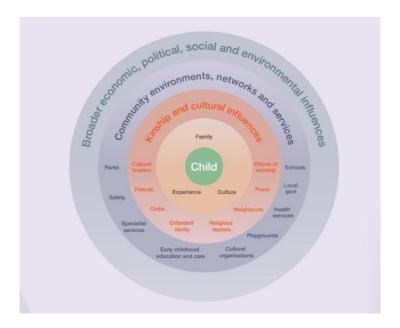
The educational program is based on an approved framework for educating young children. Educators may refer to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) or the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Kindergarten educational programs are play-based. Educators know that children are capable, intelligent, creative, curious, and strong individuals.

Highly skilled educators teach children specific skills and concepts within a flexible program that incorporates the experiences and interests of each child, with consideration to their wider family and community context. Play is essential to children's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development. It is through play that children learn about themselves, others, and their world.

Children and families are unique, and this individuality is celebrated in our programs. The educational program will meet the needs and interests of each child through a balanced combination of intentional teaching, guiding teaching and incidental learning moments.

The National Quality Framework has established a National Quality Standard to ensure high quality, consistent Early Childhood Education and Care across Australia. bestchance works collaborative with our member services to support the service in continual quality improvement. For more information about the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework go to:

www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf



#### **Incursions & Excursions**

Special experiences, such as visitors to the kindergarten, will be organised throughout the year. Educators develop risk minimisation action plans and parent/guardian consent is obtained prior to your chid ever leaving the service or participating in a service incursion.

Examples of visitors to our services may include the local fire truck, ambulance or police car to visit, music and dance experiences, gardening and sustainability events, healthy body and active play incursions, dentists, cultural experiences, responsible pet ownership, road safety, body safety awareness, or a visiting farm or wildlife incursion.

These experiences enrich the learning program and provide firsthand opportunities for children to participate in special activities.









#### **Team Support**

Leadership support is provided to our Early Childhood Educators, both as teams and as individuals. Each of our services have a Kindergarten Coordinator and Practice Coach that visit onsite regularly. This support focuses on the provision of high-quality educational programs for children that are reflective of the National Quality Framework, offering educators Professional Learning and Development opportunities which assists them to:

- Further support their families and children.
- Enhance their service and educational programming.
- Maintain current information regarding theories and best practice.
- Network with other Early Childhood Education and Care professionals.

bestchance actively encourages our educators to undertake regular Professional Learning and Development.

#### **Policies and Procedures**

Bestchance policies are written to reflect the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, Department of Education funding and service agreements as well as best practice procedures from other organisations such as the Asthma Foundation.

Families are welcome to request to see any policies at the kindergarten or ask for a copy to be emailed to their personal address. <u>Access Our Policies & Publications | Bestchance</u>

Families are also welcome to provide feedback on policies and procedures and can email bestchance Early Years Operations team via eypolicyhub@bestchance.org.au



## **Parent Advisory Group**

Some of our kindergartens have a Parent Advisory Group (PAG) that all parents are welcome to join. The PAG may undertake fundraising and organise family/community activities, including working bees, to create opportunities for families to build meaningful connections and contribute to their kindergarten community.

All PAGs are slightly different just as all communities are slightly different. If you would like further information, please contact bestchance Early Years Operations on 03 9132 6010.

## Students, Volunteers & Visitors

During the year, the service may welcome a student or volunteer into the program to support them in gaining valuable experience in Early Childhood Education. All students and volunteers remain under the direct supervision of the educators and families will be informed about visits before they arrive.

## **Child and Family Feedback**

Feedback may take the form of compliments, suggestions, enquiries, concerns, or complaints.

Our purpose is for children and families within our kindergartens to be happy with the service we provide. If you wish to provide feedback on our services or kindergarten programs, please use one of the below opportunities:

- Educators are available for conversations with families.
- Families are encouraged to direct any concerns, complaints, or feedback to the Nominated Supervisor/ Kindergarten Coordinator at the service in the first instance.
- We appreciate hearing what is working well at the kindergarten, so please let us know.
- A detailed Complaints policy is available for your information at the service at any time.
- Should parents not be satisfied or wish to discuss any other issues, please feel free to contact the Early Years Operations Team.

Alternatively, you can contact the Department of Education (DE) on the number displayed in the foyer at your service.

#### Get in touch!

General EYM phone enquiries: 03 9132 6010

General email enquiries: eyoperations@bestchance.org.au

Enrolments Team: enrolments@bestchance.org.au

Bestchance website: www.bestchance.org.au

