



CHILD ▶ FAMILY ▶ CARE
bestchance

FAMILY INFORMATION BOOK

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Kindergartens

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Acknowledgement of Country

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



Welcome families!

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

We are a not-for-profit organisation with three goals:

1. Educate and care for children
2. Support and strengthen families, and
3. Empower individuals through skilled purpose.

We believe that achieving these goals will result in stronger communities, healthier families and happier childhoods.

Our Programs

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE

Our early childhood education and care services are holistic in nature; catering for the diverse needs of families and children. Through our childcare centres and kindergartens, we build the solid foundations for children to grow into healthy, resilient and emotionally intelligent adults.



CHESHIRE SCHOOL

Cheshire School is a renowned specialist primary school for students with significant social, emotional and behavioural challenges.

Through an evidence-based intervention program, our team of teachers, psychologists and education support officers partner closely with families to help students gain the skills and confidence needed to re-engage with learning and transition back into mainstream schooling.



FAMILY SUPPORT

Through our Family Support Services, we help families who are experiencing crisis; whether it is financial instability, domestic violence, anxiety and depression, adjusting to the demands of parenthood, or caring for children with additional needs.

We provide advocacy, referrals, in-home support, financial aid and supported playgroups.



CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES

We provide specialised support and intervention therapies for children with developmental delays, disabilities or behaviour issues, aged 0 to 10 years. Our ECI team is comprised of Psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists.



NATIONALLY ACCREDITED TRAINING

Our Registered Training Organisation provides accredited training in vocational qualifications, including Early Childhood Education and Care and Education Support

Our goal is to ensure that individuals in our communities are empowered through education and employment, and that our communities are supplied with the qualified professionals needed to care for the most vulnerable.

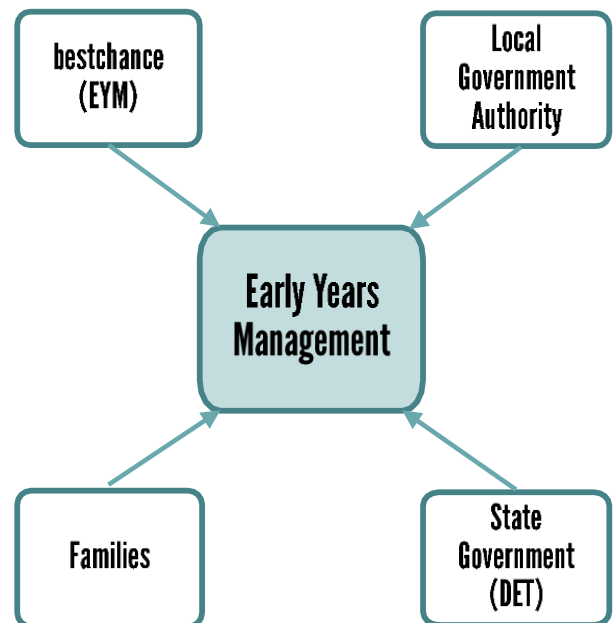


Early Years Management

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 and Training (DET)



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.
- Recruiting and management appropriately qualified staff and supporting their ongoing professional development.
- Ensuring service viability by setting fees and acquitting funding to DET and LGA's.
- 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.

2024 Term Dates

Sessional Kinder

	Term Commences	Term Ends
Term 1	Monday 29 January * ^	Thursday 28 March
Term 2	Monday 15 April	Friday 28 June
Term 3	Monday 15 July	Friday 20 September
Term 4	Monday 07 October	Friday 20 December *

Please note:

*The first day of Term 1 will be child free for educators to set up the kindergarten and the last day of Term 4 will be child free for educators to pack up the service.

^3YO Groups – children may only begin 3YO kindergarten if they are 3 years old. If they are not 3 years old by the first day of Term 1, you may not send your child until on/after their 3rd birthday.

A Meet & Greet session is arranged before a child starts attending the service in order to provide them the best possible start for the child and their family.

Meet & Greet 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 child's commencement date.

2024 Public Holidays

Holiday	Date
Labour Day	Monday 11 March
Good Friday & Easter falls during Term 1 school holidays	Friday 29 to Monday 01 April
ANZAC Day	Thursday 25 April
Monarch's Official Birthday	Monday 10 June
Day before AFL Grand Final Day	Subject to AFL schedule (likely 27/09/2024)
Melbourne Cup Day	Tuesday 05 November

Starting Kinder

At the start of the year, a meet & greet and small group timetable is developed by bestchance to assist your child to settle in to 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 work with you to find the best way to introduce your child to the kindergarten.

Starting kindergarten can be very 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 good 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.
- 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. grandparent collecting, 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.
- Encourage your child to pack their bag and be responsible for collecting their belongings and say goodbye to the educators.

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 are not able to 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.

In the event that 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 to collect their child. (Please refer to our Fees policy)

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.
- We may also celebrate special events with 'sometimes' food, as well as including cooking experiences in the planned program.
- 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, sandals, 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 a new environment may still have toileting accidents and most children prefer to change into their own clothes.
- Uniforms – parents have the option to purchase uniform items for their child, however a uniform is not compulsory. Please enquire directly with your child's kindergarten for more information.



Food at kindergarten

Children are encouraged to eat when they are hungry rather than at set meal times. 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:

Fruit and Vegetables

Whole or pre-cut into bite sized pieces or sticks, such as: apple, banana, grapes, strawberries, carrot, watermelon, peach, pear, celery, cherries, tomatoes, kiwi fruit, oranges, cucumber, mandarin, mushrooms, nectarine, pineapple etc.



Sandwiches and Wraps

Some ideas for fillings include tuna, salad, egg, cold meat, cheese, banana, chicken, avocado, grated carrot etc.

Snack Options

Other items you could add as snacks include tuna, chicken, rice, salad, baked beans, yoghurt, sushi, cheese sticks, cold meat, rice/grain crackers and dip etc.



Enrolment Records

The bestchance Central Enrolments team are located at Head Office; they are responsible for collecting all enrolment information from families. This includes the following:

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

Please notify us via email at enrolments@bestchance.org.au 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 regards to the No Jab, No Play law, please visit:

betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

Kinder Portal

Bestchance manages completion of enrolment records via the Knack Enrolments Portal. Please notify us of any changes to your personal details via email to enrolments@bestchance.org.au. We will update your records and inform the service of the change(s).

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

PLEASE NOTE:

Your child will not be able to commence attending kindergarten unless all forms have been fully completed and returned to the bestchance Central Enrolments Team located at Head Office.

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 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.

Medication

It is a legal requirement that your educators are 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 very 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 liable for any/all costs incurred.
- All incidents and accidents are reported to the Department of Education and Training (DET).

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 at all times. *If your child is away for any reason, 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 carried out in a well-organised and orderly manner. Educators 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.

Attendance Records

- Parents/guardians must sign their child 'in' and 'out' of the kindergarten each session in the Attendance Record. The exact time of arrival/collection is to be recorded, not the session time (e.g. 9:07am).
- 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.

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 appropriately Early Childhood qualifications, relevant to their employment position. All educators working with children have approved regulatory training in First Aid, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma.

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

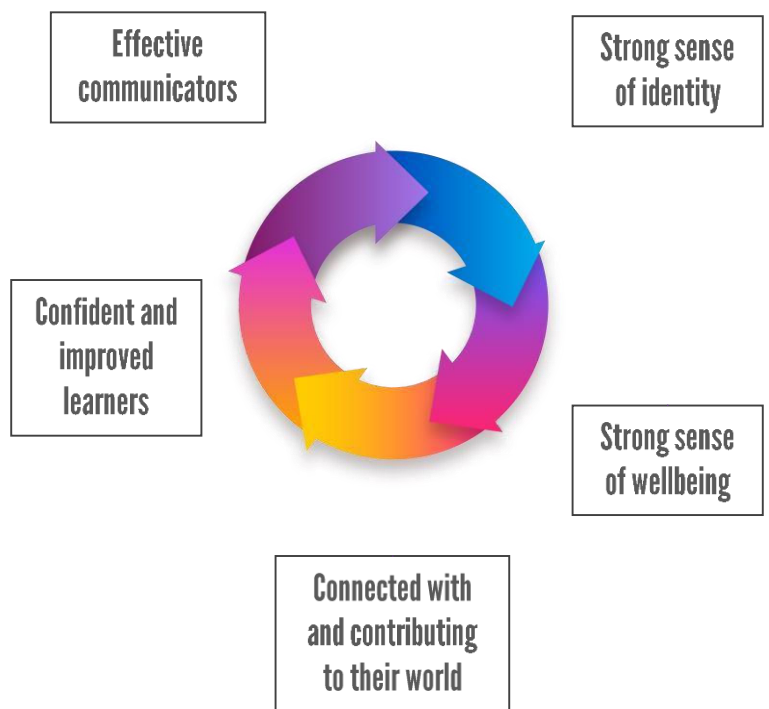
The educational program is based on an approved framework for educating young children. Educators may refer to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) or the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Kindergarten educational programs are play-based. Educators know that children 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's 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/veylldframework.pdf



Incursions & Excursions

Special experiences, such as visitors to the kindergarten, will be organised throughout the year.

Examples of visitors may include the local fire truck, ambulance or police car to visit, music and dance experiences, a photographer, or a visiting farm or wildlife incursion.

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



Program Support

Program Support is provided to our Early Childhood Educators, both as teams and as individuals. 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, DET 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.

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

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.

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's Early Years Operations team 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.

Family Feedback

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

Our purpose is for 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 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 and Training (DET) 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



Our Philosophy

Each service has its own philosophy which is displayed. The kindergarten philosophy is the 'why' behind how the service works with their children, families and each other as educators. It's the combination of the service's beliefs, values and expectations for the educational program and its outcomes.

The service philosophy is a 'living document' that reflects the values and beliefs of the current management, educators and families that belong to the service. It is revised annually to reflect the current communities' views and to be put into active use to guide every aspect of operation, practice and curriculum in a setting.

The beginning of the year is often a good time for everyone at the service to reflect on what they believe is important; an annual revision of the service philosophy provides a solid foundation for practice. Services aim to have a clear, shared vision about what is important for children and families, creating a positive climate with clear-shared intentions leading to quality outcomes.

When you visit, please read the service philosophy and feel welcome to have a conversation with educators on how the service philosophy will inform the program delivered to children, and ultimately your child and family's experience. We encourage you to participate in the 2025 philosophy review. Reviewing the philosophy together builds a collaborative community and strong family service partnerships.

