

Y KINDERS AND EARLY LEARNING CENTRES Handbook

You'll love the way they grow



Kinders

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Welcome

Welcome to a Y Early Education Service! Whether it's your first child's first time, or you're an experienced veteran of early childhood education, enrolling your child to attend an Early Education Service is a major milestone in every parent's journey.

We are excited that you've chosen a Y service for your child's next steps into the world of early education and we look forward to supporting you and your child through these years. This handbook will help prepare you for the start of the year, with advice and guidance on what to expect, what to bring and how it all works.

Participation in an Early Education Service gives parents and families the opportunity to be a part of a community focused on children's wellbeing. The Early Education Service program also provides a place for parents to get to know other families and to share their experiences and information with early childhood professionals.

Information specific to your service such as your individual teaching team, key dates and special events can be found in the service's StoryPark Community section. Your teacher will send you a link to join the StoryPark platform.

Who are we?

Your Early Education Service is under the management of Y Kinders, the Y Ballarat's Early Years Management (EYM) team.

The Y is a not-for-profit organisation and is committed to the belief in the power of inspired young people. Our EYM operates early childhood services statewide with many locations throughout the metropolitan, regional, and rural areas, with many diverse and involved communities.

All our Y Early Education Services are staffed by qualified, committed, and supportive educators who are passionate about providing quality care and education to all children. We have a strong and thorough recruitment process to ensure that our staff are fully qualified for the role they are performing, and they align to our values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility.

Each of our programs is developed by the team at the service, based on their intimate knowledge your child's interests and developmental journey, and that of your family and community.

National Quality Framework

All of our Early Education Services operate within the National Quality Framework, which encompasses the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, Education and Care Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standards.

The law and regulations govern the minimum operating requirements for every service. Services can be inspected at any time by authorised officers from the Department of Education – Quality Assessment & Rating Department.

The seven Quality Standards measure the quality of the service being provided at the time of assessment as part of a continuous improvement cycle. The assessment is a formal process, with announced visits by the authorised officers and opportunities for families, children and educators to be involved.

You can find the current ratings displayed at the service or on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/> and a copy of the laws and regulations are also available on site.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

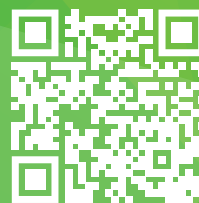
Childhood is a time to have fun, be carefree, splash around, play games – and the Y is a great place to enjoy being a child. At the Y, Safeguarding Children and Young People is our highest priority, so we want children and young people to hear our message loud and clear, we want you to “Feel Safe and Be Safe”.

We are supported by a national Safeguarding team to drive our collective approach to safeguarding children and young people and have developed our own Feel Safe, Be Safe Framework which aspires to ensure that all children and young people are safe and feel safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities. Our Feel Safe, Be Safe Framework aims to develop:

- A safe culture nationally which empowers children and young people by promoting children and young person focused leadership and governance;
- Safe environments at the Y Ballarat/Y Kinders and in our communities which empower children and young people to thrive; and
- Safe operations to ensure we have the right policies, processes and practices to keep children and young people safe.

The Y Ballarat is independently reviewed by the Australian Childhood Foundation to ensure our services are safe for all children and young people.

Visit our website (<https://ykinders.org.au>) to view our **Safeguarding Policy, Framework and Strategy for Children and Young People** or scan the QR Code



Privacy Policy

Y Ballarat will collect information for the purpose of enrolling your child for participation at their Early Education Service. The information will be used for administration purposes and to inform the service of your contact details. Information will only be disclosed to third parties when required by law or approved by Y Ballarat for the purpose of providing an educational program.

To read a copy of the Privacy Policy, please view our policies on ykinders.org.au

Custody Orders and Kinship Care

If your child or family has specific custody and access arrangements in place, please discuss these with the educator as well as providing a current Family Court or other Court order to the Enrolments Officer at the time of enrolment. It is the parent or carer's responsibility to provide information about any changes to the court orders. If there are no formal contact arrangements, or no copy of the Order is provided, educators are unable to deny access to either parent.

Where custody orders are in place, it is still required that details of both living natural parents or guardians are provided on the enrolment form. If you believe that you cannot supply this information, please contact the Enrolment Officer for your area on enrolments@yballarat.org.au or 03 4311 1500.

Supporting Inclusion

We are committed to supporting children of all abilities to access a quality early childhood education. The information collected on the application form ensures families and children have access to additional assistance with the transition of their child into Early Education Service programs, regardless of the family's circumstances or background. This includes families whose children have significant disabilities, developmental delays, as well as refugees and asylum seeker families.

Additional funding through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support or Victorian Inclusion Support Programs is available where children are eligible. The Inclusion Support Services will provide educational support and strategies to ensure the needs of each child are met. Educators will discuss this with you where appropriate.

Should you have concerns regarding your child's development please raise this with your child's teacher prior to commencement. This will ensure that we can best support your child to thrive at the service and work towards a successful transition to school.

Staying healthy in Early Education Services

It is common for children in early childhood settings to frequently become unwell, especially if it is their first time in an early childhood education setting. As your child's immune system develops, the frequency and severity of illness will typically reduce.

Over the last few years, we have all become finely attuned to the requirements of safety regarding COVID-19. In late 2022, federal and state governments made the transition from trying to 'flatten the curve' to now 'living with COVID'. This has meant some changes to how each of our services operate.

Y Ballarat has updated its COVIDSafe policy and procedure to ensure the safety of the children, the staff, the families, and the visitors to our early education services.

Any child who is unwell for any reason must be kept at home and not attend the Early Education Service facility. If you have administered medication to your child, including over the counter products such as Panadol or Nurofen, please speak with the educators at the service to determine if they are able to attend.

A child who has caught an infectious disease must be kept away from the service while the child is contagious. An exclusion list of diseases and their ideal exclusion periods can be found on the Department of Health website at School exclusion table ([health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/school-exclusion-table)); you can also find further information about exclusion periods there.

If your child informs an educator that they are unwell and continues to feel unwell for some time during the session, or the educator notices the child displaying symptoms that indicate a possible infectious illness, the educator will contact either yourself or your nominated primary contact to have the child collected.

Accidents/Incidents

As well as being fully qualified for their roles, our educators are fully trained in First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis management, and each service has a fully equipped first aid kit within reach. Educators will treat minor injuries, such as small cuts or scratches, and inform you at pick up time of the situation. An injury record on HubHello will need to be signed by an authorised person when collecting your child, which will be available on the services' electronic device.

You will be contacted when incidents that require medical attention beyond the capabilities of the educators at the service occur. If the incident requires the attention of emergency services, they will be contacted first, then yourself. Should your child require the medical attention of the emergency services, you are responsible for the cost of the call out. Any incident that meets these criteria are reported to Y Ballarat, who in turn reports these to the Department of Education.

Sun Smart

Sun protection will be required at all times of the year when the UV index is 3 or above. Information about the UV Index Level is available on the SunSmart website: **SunSmart: Prevent skin cancer & sunburn this summer - SunSmart.**

Please apply sunscreen to your child prior to arriving at the Early Education Service. Sunscreen will be reapplied throughout the session as per Sun Smart guidelines. Sun hats with broad brims are essential and must be worn outside. Singlet tops/ "shoestring" strap clothing do not provide adequate protection from UV rays and cannot be worn at the service.

For further information about our SunSmart Policy, you can find it on the Y Kinders website Policy page: **Our Policies : Y Kinders**



Fees & Funding

Early Education Centre

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) enables families attending an Early Education Centre to receive a discount directly off the daily service fee. The amount of subsidy families will receive will be based on three things.

1. Their combined family income
2. The level of 'approved' activity they undertake
3. The type of childcare service they use.

For further details on this [click here](#)

Kindergarten

In Victoria, children can attend two years of free, funded kindergarten prior to starting school.

The Victorian State Government provides funding for each child to attend up to fifteen hours of free kindergarten per week for both the three- and four-year-old kinder programs. Children can only be funded at one service, so families will need to make the choice between programs if their child is participating at more than one service, e.g. the child attends sessional kindergarten and long day care.

In some instances, a parent or teacher may consider whether a child needs to attend a third year of funded kindergarten. There are strict criteria set by DE which determines whether a child is eligible for a third year of funded kindergarten. For any enquiries on this matter, please speak further with your child's teacher.

Session Closures

From time to time, it may be necessary for us to close the service. Where the closure is planned - such as all staff attending a training day - we will provide notice well in advance. However, there may be times when we are required to close with little notice. This is usually as a result of regular staff being unable to work and no relief staff available to step in, but may also be as a result of local conditions such as road closures due to flooding. In these instances, the Y will endeavor to provide you with as much notice as possible.

With kindergarten in Victoria fully funded by the government, there are no fee reimbursements provided to families if the service is closed. In our early education services, there is no fee charged for days where we are closed, regardless of whether it is a pre-planned or emergency closure.

Is my child eligible for Kindergarten this year?

The requirements for your child to attend are:

- Your child will be turning three- or four years old on or before the 30th of April in the year that they are attending, OR
- Your child was eligible to attend a three- or four-year-old kinder program the previous year, however you deferred or withdrew your child on or before the end of February in the year they were to attend the program OR
- Your child is turning six years of age and has been granted an exemption from attending school to attend a kinder program by your regional DE office.

Please note that your child does not need to be toilet trained to attend an Early Education Service.

For more information, visit the Y Kinders website: [Y Kinders](#) or the DE website: [Education – information for parents | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Visit ykinders.org.au/when-do-i-send-my-child-to-kinder to calculate your start date.



Settling into the Service

Starting at an Early Education Service is a very exciting and nervous time for children, as it signals a change in routine and development. While many children adjust to the new setting quickly, placing their bag away and making friends, for some children this routine can take time to develop. While this is completely normal, if you do have concerns about this transition for your child, we encourage you to speak with the educators at the service.

Meetings with Educators

Educators will regularly share information about each child's progression and development during their time at Early Education Service. This may be a conversation at pick-up or drop-off times, or through our online platforms such as HubHello or StoryPark. For more in-depth discussions, parents are able to make appointments with the educator of their child's group to address any questions or concerns.

All appointments are made during an educator's non-contact time, to ensure there is no disruption to the learning program. These meetings may be held face to face at the service, or through online platforms such as Microsoft Teams.

Suitable clothing

While at an Early Education Service, your child will have many opportunities to be physically active or involved in messy play. These experiences are fundamental to each child's development. We recommend that children are dressed in clothing that allows plenty of movement, is suitable for a variety of activities, is SunSmart and can get dirty.

- Easily laundered clothes are essential.
- Thongs, crocs, slippers and long dresses or skirts are dangerous when climbing and are not suitable.
- Sun hats with broad brims are essential and must be worn outside at any time of the year when the UV rating is above 3. Children who do not have a SunSmart hat may not be able to play outside.
- Clothing must have sleeves and should preferably be made from a closely woven fabric. Singlet tops/"shoestring" strap clothing do not provide adequate protection from UV rays and cannot be worn at the service.
- Clothes need to be easily managed by the children, especially when going to the toilet, and clothes that may be taken off **MUST** be named.
- In the cooler weather children need waterproof and warm outer clothing as they will be going outside in most weather conditions.
- Please pack spare clothes. The children will enjoy water play in the warmer weather, messy activities all year round and of course may need to change due to a toileting accident which is to be expected.
- Pack a spare pair of shoes that your child can wear in the case of a toileting accident, or during water or messy play.

Signing in and out

All children must be signed in and out with the exact time of arrival and departure recorded by the person who delivers and collects the child.

Signing in and out can be completed using the service's electronic device, or by scanning the QR Code at the service.

Please ensure all doors and gates are securely closed upon exit and be mindful not to hold open the exit door or gate for any children other than your own.

Collecting your child from the service

Collection of a child must be by a person who is authorised on the enrolment form. Written authorisation must be provided by an authorised person in the event that the child is to be collected by an adult who is not on the enrolment form. In the case of an emergency, verbal authorisation may be given by a parent/guardian, with written confirmation to be provided at the first opportunity after the collection.

It is important that children are collected on time at the end of session; where an authorised nominee is late collecting their child and has not notified the service, the service will attempt to contact all authorised nominees to determine when to expect collection. If the primary contacts do not respond, the service will notify authorities. Please note a late collection fee may also be charged.

Toys

We understand that some children might have a comfort toy that they would like to keep in their bag or occasionally carry when upset. We also encourage children to bring in items of interest to share with others, particularly if they are related to recent experiences in the service.

While all effort will be made to ensure the safe return of any personal items, educators are not responsible for toys from home which may become broken or lost. We encourage parents to plan for when their child brings a special item to the service to remain on site while the child shares the item with the group. The parent will take the item home for safe keeping at the end of the child's presentation. Please discuss this with your child's educators if you have any questions or concerns.

Healthy eating

We believe that children learn best with healthy and tasty nutritious food during their busy day at an Early Education Service. For more information about the Policy on healthy eating, you can find it on the Y Kinders website's Policy page: [Our Policies : Y Kinders](#)

Based on advice from the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, we recommend the following:

Best Choices

- Fruit – fresh or tinned (dried is high in sugar so best eaten occasionally).
- Vegetable sticks with dips or a small container with mixed vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, peas, cucumber etc.
- Fruit yoghurts, cheese stick or slice (don't forget to include a cold pack to keep cool and any required eating utensils).
- Fruit muffins
- Sandwiches – Try a variety of breads and fillings. Some different breads include rolls, pita bread, flat bread, fruit loaf or buns, focaccias, scones, pikelets, muffins, crumpets, crisp breads, rice cakes, corn thins to name a few.
- Please provide water only in your child's drink bottle.

Best Left Out

- Dried fruit bars and 'straps' or 'wraps' and lollies, or other foods with high sugar contents
- Chips and packets of crisps
- 'Dairy desserts' such as custard or jellies
- Sweet dips such as chocolate spread
- Savoury 'oven baked' biscuits
- Avoid fatty meats such as salami and strass
- Donuts and creamy cakes
- Muesli bars and chocolate bars in lunch boxes
-



HubHello - Parent Portal Overview

The HubHello Parent Portal is the main tool used by families to check their children's enrolment details and update as required. A unique username and password will be provided on enrolment, which provides access to the desktop or App version of the program.

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that their details are always up to date. Should you need to change any details, e.g. Early Education Service contact details etc. once the on-line enrolment form has been submitted, please do so via the HubHello portal or contact our Enrolment Team.

How to log into HubHello- Via Desktop

- Type HubHello (<https://hubhello.com>) into your browser address bar or search engine to open log in screen
- Click on 'log in' in the top right corner
- Enter username and password as provided, click 'log in'
- To log out, click on the parent image in the top right corner and select 'log out' from the drop-down list of options
- The HubHello landing page provides links to the different areas primarily through the top tool bar (shown below).
- Clicking on the three dots will bring up a menu of programs available through HubHello.



HubHello parent portal app

The HubHello parent mobile application is available to download for both iOS and Android from either the App Store or Google Play Store. Parent tip sheets will be shared with families throughout the year.

Volunteering at an Early Education Service

If you have availability and would like to assist your child's Early Education Service, there are various opportunities offered to parents/guardians and family members (i.e. grandparents). If you wish to register your name to volunteer at your children's service, speak with the educators for further information regarding the volunteer process.

You may wish to volunteer:

- During program times (i.e. reading with the children; attending excursions)
- Outside of program times (i.e. working bees)
- With the service's Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

If you are staying at the Early Education Service during session time to volunteer, or participate in an excursion or other specific activity, you will need to complete the Volunteer Registration Process with Y Ballarat prior to starting. You can contact us via volunteer@yballarat.org.au to find out more.

Working With Children Check requirements

Parents who are involved in the Stay and Play program at your early education service, where you spend time with your child to experience their time in the program, do not need to hold a Working With Children Check (WWCC).

The Role of the Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Enjoy being on your child's Parent Advisory Group (PAG) and working as part of a team, while making new friendships. Some of the activities you may undertake are:

- Fundraising and social activities
- Feedback about policies and procedures when required
- Volunteer for working bees

For more information regarding wishing to join the Parent Advisory Group at your child's service, speak with the staff or email pag@yballarat.org.au for more details.

Placement Students at Early Education Service

During the year, the Early Education Service may provide placement opportunities for students studying Early Childhood Education. All students remain under the direct supervision of the educators and families will be informed about students to the Early Education Service before they arrive.

Photographs/Videos and Social Media

Parents are only permitted to take photographs or video of their own child at any time. To ensure that no children have their image accidentally captured and/or shared, parents are to refrain from taking photos or videos while in the service.

We recognise that many of our families are connected outside of the Early Education Service in the local community. To ensure the privacy wishes of all families, regardless of relationships, it is required that parents avoid using public social media platforms to communicate about experiences in the program. This includes images of or references to other children attending the service. If you would like the opportunity to take photos of the service setting with your child to share with remote family members, please speak with the educators at the service to arrange a suitable time.

No smoking/vaping

As a government-funded program, smoking and vaping are prohibited on Kindergarten grounds and within 4 metres of the Early Education Service entrance.

Complaints/Grievance Procedure - Compliments and Feedback

In line with our Complaints Policy, any concerns regarding your child and/or the program should be initially discussed with the educators.

Any other areas for feedback or any issues you feel are still unresolved after meeting with the educators should be referred to Y Kinders/ Y Ballarat via phone: (03) 4311 1500, or via email: enrolments@yballarat.org.au. Alternatively, families and community members can contact us via the QR Code below, which is also on display in each service.



**Scan the QR code to
access the feedback form.**

<https://ymca.jotform.com/213270518682052>

Our Complaints and Grievances Policy is available on the Y Kinders website: **Our Policies : Y Kinders** We view any feedback as an opportunity to improve the services we provide.

No Jab No Play

As part of the enrolment process, you will be required to produce an up-to-date copy of your child's Australian immunisation status. This is a requirement under the "No Jab, No Play" legislation; you must provide evidence from the Australian Immunisation Register of:

- A full Australian Immunisation for your child OR
- A catch-up schedule for your child's vaccinations OR
- A medical reason your child is unable to be fully immunised. "Conscientious objection" is not an exemption under the "No Jab, No Play" legislation.

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood and care services and must be provided.

You can obtain a current copy of your child's immunisation status from your Medicare account on myGov or the Australian Immunisation Register.

An updated copy must be provided to Y Ballarat any time there is a change. The copy can be sent to enrolments@yballarat.org.au.

For more information, visit our FAQ website: FAQs : Y Kinders, or visit the Department of Health "No Jab, No Play" FAQ website: [No Jab, No Play – frequently asked questions \(health.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play)

Managing and preparing for incidents and emergencies

We take every precaution to protect the children in our care from hazards. In any situation where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a person at an early childhood education and care service, our educators will enact the emergency management plan.

We regularly practice different drills at the service each term. This helps children to understand the importance of following instructions during critical times and be more comfortable should they need to follow the plan.

For more information regarding the Y Ballarat's policies on incidents and emergencies, please visit the Y Kinders website Policies page: [Our Policies: Y Kinders](#)

Medical Conditions

It is required that you share any medical conditions that your child has with the educators at your child's service so that they can support your child to fully participate in the program.

Any ongoing medical conditions, including those that impact your child's development or wellbeing, must have a completed Medical Conditions form. Copies of this form as well as any others required by Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011, are supplied to the service before the child can begin attending any sessions.

Please contact our Enrolment Officer at the time of completing your enrolment to ensure all required forms are completed. Enrolment Officers can be contacted by email enrolments@yballarat.org.au or phone 03 4311 1500.

If your child has recently been diagnosed with a short-term ailment such as an ear infection and requires antibiotics during session times, you must speak with educators to inform them of the medical condition and the medication schedule. Short-term illnesses do not require a Medical Conditions Form to be completed, however you are required to complete a Medication Authorisation form at the service.

Anaphylaxis and Allergies

We may have children in attendance that have life threatening allergies to certain foods or products. There will be clear signage on display regarding which foods are not to be brought into the Early Education Service. Thank you in advance for respecting the needs of all the children in the group and the need to minimise the risk of allergic reaction.

If your child has a diagnosed anaphylactic or allergic reaction to a food product, a natural item such as grass or animal dander, or is diagnosed with asthma, epilepsy or diabetes, then you need to supply a copy of the medical management plan that has been developed by your child's doctor when submitting the enrolment form. You will also need to consult with the service's educators to create a Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plan and a Medical Conditions Communication Plan. Any required medications, such as an Epi-Pen or an asthma reliever, will need to be brought with the child and discussed with the educators; we encourage you to arrange a spare set of medication to be kept at the service.

Please note that under the Education & Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations 2011, we are unable to have a child with a diagnosed medical condition attend the service without a medical management plan and required in-date medications attend the service.

At no time is it the responsibility of the service to provide medication to manage any child's medical condition.

Medication

All medication coming into the service must be:

- Clearly labelled with the child's full name and the dosage required; if the medication is prescribed, the pharmacist's label must be affixed.
- Within the expiry date on the package/bottle, and the expiry date must be legible.
- Recorded in full by the family on a Medication Authorisation form. For each instance that the medication is require, the family will need to complete a separate request.



Y Kinders (EYM)

Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street Ballarat, VIC 3350

Phone: 03 4311 1500

Email: enrolments@yballarat.org.au

Website: ykinders.org.au

You'll love the way they grow