



WHEELERS HILL CHILD CARE CENTRE

3 & 4 Year-old Kindergarten Handbook



KINDERGARTEN IN LONG DAY CARE

Fitting the hours of a kindergarten program into a working day is difficult for many families. At Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre (WHCC), our 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs are fully integrated within our long day care setting — providing families with flexibility, convenience, and continuity of care.

For children already attending WHCC, starting kindergarten within the service means they benefit from established relationships with peers and educators they already know and trust. For families with more than one child in care, it also means everyone can be dropped off and picked up together.

Our kindergarten programs are led by university-qualified Early Childhood Teachers, ensuring children benefit from the best in early education — including preparation for school, literacy and numeracy, social skills, and emotional development.

We implement a play-based emergent curriculum in which the program is planned and implemented according to the emerging interests and needs of each child. This approach allows children to develop at their own pace while building curiosity, resilience, and creativity.

Free Kinder

The Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reform is making high-quality kindergarten free for all Victorian children, supporting access to two years of funded kindergarten before school.

- WHCC offers the full 15 hours per week of Free Kinder for both 3-year-old and 4-year-old programs
- The government subsidy is paid directly into your family account on a weekly basis — during school terms only
- To access funding, children must attend a minimum of 15 hours per week (at least 2 days)

Please refer to the Free Kinder pamphlet available in our foyer for detailed information, or speak with our Centre Director.

3-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN (KINDER 3)

Our Kinder 3 program is led by Amelia, a Master of Education qualified Early Childhood Teacher and Kanwal, Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education Teacher, and runs all day Monday to Friday.

- Children must be turning three (3) by 30 April of the kindergarten year
- Children must attend at least 15 hours per week (minimum 2 days) to qualify for funding
- Families are welcome to choose their preferred attendance days, subject to availability
- Educator-to-child ratio is 1:11 — the same standard as sessional kindergarte
-

In Kinder 3, our qualified teacher supports children through a range of play-based learning experiences that are stimulating, joyful, and tailored to where each child is developmentally. Children explore the natural world, build friendships, and develop the foundations for school readiness — all through play.

4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN (KINDER 4)

Our Kinder 4 program is led by Shivangi, who holds a Graduate Diploma in Education (Early Childhood), and Shashni who hold a Bachelor of Education and runs all day Monday to Friday.

- Children must be turning four (4) by 30 April of the kindergarten year
- Children must attend at least 15 hours per week to qualify for funding
- Families are welcome to choose their preferred attendance days, subject to availability
- Educator-to-child ratio is 1:11 — the same standard as sessional kindergarten

Research shows that two years of quality kindergarten are better than one. Children who begin their kinder journey at age 3 show even greater benefits by the time they reach school. Our Kinder 4 program builds on that foundation with a rich, intentional program designed to set your child up for a confident and positive start to school.

Transition Learning and Development Statements

Towards the end of the year, a Transition Learning and Development Statement (TLDS) is written by the Kinder Teachers for every child moving on to school. The TLDS:

- Provides a snapshot of your child's learning and development across their kinder year
- Identifies their strengths, interests, and approaches to learning
- Includes effective strategies to help their primary school support them from day one
- Promotes continuity of learning between kindergarten and prep

You and your child will have input into the TLDS. Teacher interviews take place twice a year to discuss your child's development and progress.

WHAT IS A PLAY-BASED CURRICULUM?

Play is the work of the child — the way children make sense of the world around them. Our play-based curriculum is child-focused, emerging from the current interests, needs, and developmental levels of the children in our care. We find that kinder-aged children learn most readily when the curriculum is relevant and meaningful to their lives.

Our program is interactive and exploratory, involving a rich variety of materials, equipment, and real-life experiences. Children learn vital skills through play as they are encouraged to make choices, share in decision-making, and take ownership of their learning.

Children's progress is documented through observational assessments, summative assessments, and consistent communication with families — not worksheets or academic testing.

- Early literacy and numeracy, STEM, and creative experiences are woven through the daily program — both intentionally and spontaneously
- Our indoor and outdoor environments are used throughout the entire day — outdoor play allows for gross motor experiences such as running, jumping, climbing, and balancing
- Sustainability is embedded into daily life: children care for plants and animals through our worm farm, composting, watering the garden, and feeding the fish
- Children's voice is central — their ideas, questions, and interests shape the program and planning

Why Play-Based Learning?

- Evidence shows that 2 years of quality kindergarten are better than 1
- Neuroscience research confirms that early learning is vital for optimal brain development
- Play-based learning supports holistic development — social, cognitive, emotional, physical, and language
- Children who attend kindergarten are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable at school

- Kindergarten teachers are trained to identify and support children with additional needs
- Creative and innovative thinking is enhanced through imaginative play, construction, art, and music

WHAT IS PLAY?

Play is important because it is the child's 'work'. Play is not an organised activity like football, swimming lessons, or ballet — while these are wonderful, they are not play. It is through play that children make sense of their world, learn to socialise, solve problems, and develop creativity and independence.

Play is child-directed. During play-based learning, educators create an engaging environment, facilitate learning, model skills, and guide children to develop their individual capabilities. Through play-based provocations, children develop:

- Fine motor skills — finger and hand control
- Language and literacy
- Cooperation, turn-taking, and resilience
- Problem-solving strategies
- Size, shape, position, number, and letter recognition
- Independence and self-confidence

There are long stretches of uninterrupted time for children's play and exploration throughout the day — because we believe children deserve to engage deeply with one another and with their ideas, questions, and challenges.

WHAT DO WE FOCUS ON AT WHEELERS HILL CHILD

CARE CENTRE?

Your child's brain develops faster in the first five years of life than at any other time. The experiences they have in these early years are vital — they shape who they will become. To support your child's development and prepare them for school and for life, we focus on:

Emotional Development

- Emotional literacy — recognising, naming, and expressing feelings
- Self-regulation — managing their own feelings and behaviour
- Self-awareness and self-esteem
- Empathy and concern for others
- Resilience and confidence
- Motivation and a love of learning

Social Skills

- Social and communication skills
- Sharing, taking turns, and cooperation

- Conflict resolution and listening
- Working alongside others — in small and large groups
- Understanding social boundaries and behaviour limits
- Building and maintaining friendships
- Teamwork

School Readiness

- Name recognition and early literacy (language, sounds, letter and word recognition, pencil control)
- Early numeracy (number recognition, counting, size, shape, patterns, colour)
- Early STEM — science, technology, engineering, and maths
- Creative art experiences
- Music, movement, and drama
- Developing an increased attention span
- A love of learning and eagerness to explore the world
- Using school equipment (scissors, sticky tape, glue sticks, hole punchers)

Independence

- Responsibility for their own belongings
- Dressing and undressing themselves
- Using the toilet independently
- Confidently exploring indoor and outdoor environments
- Packing up after themselves and respecting shared equipment

Skill Development

- Fine motor skills — developing finger and hand control
- Gross motor skills — developing balance, coordination, and body awareness
- Concentration and following multi-step instructions
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Speech development and communication
- Cognitive skills — cause and effect, reasoning, memory, and visual processing

Health, Wellbeing & Sustainability

- Nutrition, healthy bodies, and mental health and wellbeing
- Sustainability — gardening, composting, water saving, and caring for our worm farm, plants, and fish
- Mindfulness and self-care practices
- Caring for and respecting our natural environment
- Community awareness and multicultural celebrations

HOW DOES KINDERGARTEN IN LONG DAY CARE DIFFER FROM SESSIONAL KINDER?

At WHCC, families are offered the opportunity to attend a specialised kindergarten program within a flexible long day care environment. Here is how we compare:

Long Day Care Kindergarten (WHCC)	Sessional Kindergarten
3 & 4-year-old programs led by a university-qualified Early Childhood Teacher	3 & 4-year-old programs led by a university-qualified Early Childhood Teacher
High-quality, play-based, indoor/outdoor program	High-quality, play-based, indoor/outdoor program
Operates Monday to Friday, open 7:00am–6:30pm. Closed on public holidays and weekends only.	Operates in sessions across the week, usually school hours. Closed on school holidays, public holidays and weekends.
Flexibility to choose attendance days and hours	Sessions are pre-planned with set drop-off and pick-up times
Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and late snack provided	Meals usually provided by families
Subsidised by the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	Subsidised by the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS)
Siblings can attend at the same time — all drop-off and pick-up together	Sessional kinder is only for the child attending the program
Toileting support and assistance with toilet training available	Children are often required to be fully toilet trained
Must be fully vaccinated to enrol	Must be fully vaccinated to enrol
Individual learning plans, observational documentation, and detailed TLDS for school transition	Individual learning plans, observational documentation, and detailed TLDS for school transition

In Victoria, the Kindergarten Tick identifies a service that offers an approved funded kindergarten program. WHCC proudly displays the Kinder Tick — meaning you can be confident our program is led by a qualified teacher, is play-based, and is funded and approved by the Victorian Government.

HOW CAN FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL?

The move from kindergarten to primary school is an exciting milestone. Here are some practical ways you can support your child through this transition:

- Talk regularly with your child about the experiences they might have, the friends they will make, and the interesting things they will learn
- Walk past the new school together so your child knows what it looks like and feels familiar with the environment
- Practice independence — encourage them to put on and do up their own shoes, carry their own bag, and pack/unpack their lunch
- Learn the names for break times such as 'recess' and 'lunch'
- Encourage eating and drinking without help — wrapping and unwrapping food, filling up a drink bottle
- Share and discuss positive experiences from your own school days
- Help them name their items and uniforms so they can identify them if they get lost
- Show where you will pick them up each day and explain what to do if you are late
- Talk about staying safe at school and who to ask for help
- Attend the school's transition days and meet your child's prep teacher together
- Explore the prep classrooms, lockers, play areas, toilets, and drinking taps together
- Reassure your child that it is always OK to ask an adult if they are unsure of anything
- Establish a calm and consistent 'goodbye' routine
- Create a sleep routine — 5-year-olds need 10–12 hours of sleep each night
- Borrow library books to read together and talk about them

CONTACT US

- We welcome any questions, conversations, or feedback. Our team is here to support you and your child throughout their kindergarten journey.

Address	303-307 Jells Road, Wheelers Hill VIC 3150
Phone	(03) 9561 7789
Email	wheelershillccc@bigpond.com
Website	www.wheelershillchildcare.com.au
Centre Director	Simone Cheslett
Kinder 3 Teacher	Amelia Chu and Kanwal Ahuja
Kinder 4 Teacher	Shivangi Yadav and Shashni Bowattegedara

We look forward to welcoming your child to our kinder community!