

bupup balak wayipungang program

Supporting the young kids program



About me

Hi, my name is Shania Spriggs. I am a proud Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara, and Dja Dja Wurrung woman who is passionate about supporting my community and creating meaningful outcomes for First Nations people. I have a background in community services and individual education support. I am committed to making a positive difference through culturally safe, community-focused support and advocacy.

How can you get support from a wayipungit?

If you are in the Hume or Merri-bek Local Government Areas, I am your go to contact. Please feel free to email, call, or text me at my contact details below to discuss how I can support you, your service or a family in your area. If you are located outside of Hume or Merri-bek, please contact your local Department of Education office for support.

What is a wayipungit and what do they do?

wayipungit roles are an initiative funded by the Department of Education and based within local organisations. The role is designed to create culturally safe and welcoming kindergarten environments that support Koorie children to feel accepted, valued, and proud of their culture and identity. wayipungit workers also support the inclusion and engagement of Koorie children, parents, and families within kindergarten programs. They help build strong relationships between families, educators, and services, while promoting children's wellbeing, cultural connection, advocacy, and family engagement.

What does my work with families look like?

My role focuses on supporting services and professionals to build strong relationships with Koorie families. As a wayipungit, I take the time to understand each family's circumstances, strengths, cultural identity, and needs, while building trust in a culturally safe and respectful way. I support families to overcome barriers to early childhood education, including assisting with enrolment processes and transitions into kindergarten or school, helping children access education that supports their wellbeing, cultural identity, and sense of belonging. I also connect families with appropriate services and professionals to support their needs. I believe meaningful change begins with children, and by creating culturally safe and supportive environments early in life, we can strengthen children's wellbeing, identity, and future opportunities.

What does my work with children & early learning services look like?

I work with kindergartens and early learning services to strengthen educators understanding and engagement with Koorie families. This includes supporting services to create inclusive and welcoming environments where children and families feel respected, valued, and connected. Through this work, I help ensure children can access early learning environments that support their wellbeing, cultural identity, and sense of belonging.

What does my work with the First Nations community look like?

As an Aboriginal woman, I recognise the importance of culture, connection, and community, while understanding the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma and systemic barriers experienced by many Aboriginal families. This understanding guides my practice in respectful, empowering, and culturally informed ways. I also attend local community events, including Boorai playgroups and community celebrations, and participate in networking and engagement opportunities with the Hume Aboriginal Engagement Team. These experiences allow me to connect with First Nations community members and Elders, build relationships, and strengthen my understanding through shared conversations, knowledge, and lived experiences.